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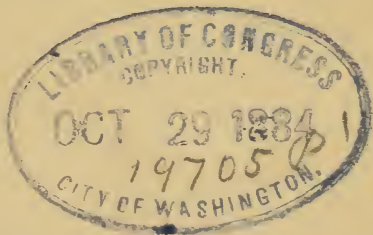
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE
CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.

BY
FANNY L. ARMSTRONG.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY
FRANCES E. WILLARD,
PRESIDENT NATIONAL WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.



NEW YORK:
FOWLER & WELLS CO., PUBLISHERS,
No. 753 BROADWAY.

1894

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1884

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12-30367

DEDICATED

TO THE

— LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF GOD,

WITH THE

HOPE, AND THE PRAYER

THAT THEY WILL FORM THE ACQUAINTANCE, CULTIVATE
THE SOCIETY, AND IMITATE THE EXAMPLES,

OF

THE CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.



INTRODUCTION.

BY FRANCES E. WILLARD,

President of the National W. C. T. U.

FOUR years ago I went South for the first time, meeting in the rare old city of New Orleans, the author of this little book, who is a native of Louisiana. Her bright mind, warm heart, and confiding manners won my sincere interest and sympathy. She was literally "alone in the world," except for the atmosphere of Christian kindness and goodwill that must ever surround an earnest and genuine young woman in the Church of Christ. The dearest wish of my Southern friend was to visit Chautauqua, that grand "People's University," which annually attracts one hundred thousand visitors. Miss Armstrong was a student of the "C. L. S. C.," and as I had long known Dr. Vincent, and honored him for his generous heart, no less than his great work, I wrote him of my little Southron, whom he made welcome to a summer home in that beautiful resort. Since then she has lived at the North; is a newspaper correspondent and stenographer, whose brave efforts for self-help have deeply enlisted my sympathies. Her long attendance in Sunday-school as scholar and teacher have given our author

great familiarity with Bible truth, and it was a winsome thought of hers to picture in simple phrase the stories of children with which its sacred page abounds. More than thirty distinct characters are traced in this little book, all yielding helpful lessons in the patient formation of true character.

Thus much for the author, her work, and my acquaintance with both, the recital being made because I think a book gains interest from our knowledge of the writer.

Beyond all others, this is The Children's Age, and every word written or act done in their interest is a force set in motion for all mankind. For Childhood is the fortress of Humanity posted away out on the frontier of time, and if we furnish weapons, ammunition, and military drill, children will "hold the fort" when the veterans grow weary. As one of our gifted W. C. T. U. workers has said: "The door of millennial glory has a child's hand on the latch." By as much as formation is better than reformation, and prevention than cure, by so much are we bound to study "the Child in the midst" as the most impressive object-lesson of the ages. It is

"Another little wave
Upon the sea of life ;
Another soul to save,
Amid its toil and strife.

"Two more little hands
To work for good or ill ;
A little untaught brain,
A little untrained will.

“Two more little feet
To walk the dusty road
And choose where two paths meet
The narrow or the broad!”

Beyond all other questions of our complex modern life is this :

How are we helping children to choose ?

There is a Decalogue of Natural Law “written in their members.” There is a Ritual of this body which is the Temple of the Holy Ghost. The Bible says :

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Alas for the little untaught sowers, among America's ten million children! I know a fair, sweet girl who gathers thirty boys in her Sunday-school class each week, and they have a “Golden Text” that lasts the year around, recited always in concert at the opening of the lesson :

“Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and spirit, WHICH ARE GOD'S.”

The teacher or the parent who steadfastly shows forth these principles in word and deed, is Heaven's true evangel to the little ones under her care. Purity in the personal conduct of life, a “Thus saith Nature, and thus saith the Lord” for total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, tobacco, and unhealthful food—these will put the basis of worship where it

belongs, viz.: in this wonderful "House we live in," which, while its skylight opens toward God's infinite Heaven, has its foundation firmly fixed upon the earth. Ascetic ages affected to despise the body, and hence could but degrade the soul. Christ came to regenerate not the spirit only, but the casket which contains it, and a little child of pure ancestry and religious physical training will be so gently and sweetly led into the sacredness of spiritual discipleship toward Christ, that no violent convulsion of soul shall be considered needful to certify that supreme epoch in its history. I am glad that the enlightened publishers of this little book have worked so faithfully and long to bring a wandering race back to the plane of physical sanity, and I fervently pray that every mother who reads these friendly lines may determine to emulate in the diet, dress, and habits of her little ones the blessed simplicity that characterized the every-day lives of THE CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.

REST COTTAGE, Evanston, Ill.,
August, 1884.

PREFACE.

GOODNESS is a part of God, therefore eternal. These children are not dust and ashes, because their bodies have slept for ages in the tomb. They are immortal souls, with spiritual bodies, like the glorified one of our Saviour. They are now in a *state* of keenly conscious happiness or misery—in a *place* substantial and durable, and radiant with the glory of God. They have each, in his or her place, left “foot-prints on the sands of time,” that the waves of eternity will make only more enduring. Each is still exerting an unseen but all the more felt influence on our lives and characters. Where is our Decalogue without the sleeping infant in the bulrushes? With the sword of Herod take the baby-life that began a *human* career in the lowly stable at Bethlehem, and where are we? Where would be the finest portion of the Psalms had Goliath conquered the boy-champion? God raised up Joseph, and directed events in his life, causing the wrath of men to praise him, that his people might live, and renewed luster be cast on his holy name. Baby Joash barely escaped death to be crowned king of a mighty nation.

These children, though their names form a large portion of our Bible, were all sinners, save *one*. Their obituaries may be written thus: They lived, suffered, sinned, and died. One became so pure, and held such sweet intercourse with God, that one day he went on the top of a mountain to converse with him—and the grand old conversation may be still going on for aught I know. The little boys saved by Elijah and Elisha have left no description of the scenery on the other shore. The daughter of Jairus left us no hint as to the wanderings of her pure spirit between her death and the blessed “*Talitha cumi*” of Jesus. One of these children lived to man’s estate, then *laid down his life*, a ransom for many. His *death* possessed so much virtue that it brings *life* to *all* who will accept it. There was no power that could have taken this precious life, but *he laid it down*—poured out his blood on a cross for us.

By and by, when the last smile has faded from the last human face, and the last tear has been shed, and we all meet at the judgment-seat of Christ, if in that day I can hear one tongue say, “I was converted and brought to Christ through the influence of a little book I once read, called ‘*Children of the Bible*,’” then shall I feel repaid a thousand-fold for all the trouble, time, and expense, I have had in the preparation of this volume. It was not written to instruct grown people, neither to *please* merely, but for the spiritual good of the children. If *they* are made better men

and women by it, then I am well paid. If this book has the truth in it, and is really God's work, *it will live* and accomplish "that whereunto it is sent." A good book, like a good life, *cannot* die. Go, then, "Children of the Bible," and help, by your influence, those I have taught to be "*world-betterers*." You did not cease to live when you were laid in the tomb—you still live on the pages of history, and, all unseen, you still assist us to make better characters for eternity. Your works do follow you, and by and by hundreds and thousands will join you in singing the hymns of redemption.

That these stories, so imperfectly narrated, may be the means of doing great good, is the prayer of one who loves both the children of the Bible and the children of the nineteenth century.

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CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE.

ISHMAEL.

“Thou God seest me.” Gen. xvi. 13.

SARAI, the wife of Abram, was ninety years old, and had no children—this was a source of grief to her. She had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. God promised Abram a son, so Sarai persuaded him to take Hagar for a wife. At this time they were residing in the land of Canaan. Being the wife of her former master, Hagar, who possessed a low order of mind, became insolent and overbearing to her mistress.

Two women cannot be complete mistresses of one house at one time, neither can they hold undisputed sway over the heart of one man. He may love a thousand women—indeed, if he is a true man, all good women will find a place in his esteem, but *only one* is his wife in the eyes of God. A man's heart is a dominion over which *only one* woman can reign supreme. God has a heart large enough to hold unnumbered millions of worlds,

but I have never heard of but one "Bride of the Lamb," the Church of the living God.

Sarai being the true wife of Abram, he took her part in all family quarrels: at last, with his consent, she gave Hagar a beating—that is, "dealt hardly with her;" and Hagar, feeling that "discretion is the better part of valor," ran away. Going out into the wilderness, on her way to Egypt, she wandered about a long time; at length, feeling fatigued, she sat down by a fountain.

With her face buried in her hands, she sobbed bitterly. Poor Hagar! so friendless, so hopeless, as she sits and sobs out her sorrows to the winds, is a type of her sex. All have felt as she did. The rich and poor, the high and low, the ignorant and the learned—all have their Gethsemanes in this life, where alone they weep bitter, bitter tears; but that blessed angel who came to Jesus is still on the wing—young, bright, beautiful—and as swift to execute the high behests of Heaven as when, in his youth, he flew, on the wings of sympathy and love, to comfort the almost expiring God-man, in the lonely solitudes and darkness of Gethsemane.

While alone in this unhappy condition, exposed to ten thousand dangers, yet caring for nothing but the desolation of soul within, an angel, for the first time, *appears* on the stage of action, as comforter, friend, and adviser. This angelic messenger did

not come clad in the transfiguration glories of heaven, because Hagar would have been frightened.

Angel means messenger; and therefore friends, loving words, kindly smiles, *any thing* that acts as an incentive to better living, is an angel to us. God not only gave his only-begotten Son to die for us, but, with every passing breeze, thousands of unseen angels, to guide and assist us in preparing and educating ourselves to live forever in his presence; and as unseen good attracts the good in us, so does our belief in, and love for, these invisible heavenly visitants increase as our aspirations tend heavenward.

What matters it to us that our gross material eyes fail to see them? Why should we wish to hear the flutter of their wings, when God has, for wise reasons, ordained otherwise? We believe in the existence of the gases, of electricity, of the steam that propels our floating palaces on our rivers. We believe in a thousand unseen things. Why should the belief in angels seem so absurd?

The angel said: "Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai." The angel said: "Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself to her hands." Having given this judicious advice, he makes a promise: "I will

multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. Thou shalt bare a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

Because Hagar acted cowardly in running away, and because she was insolent and overbearing, God embodies those qualities in the coming son. With the ill-fated Ishmael all can sympathize, as we are *all* sufferers from the iniquities of our parents generations back. Hagar, out of a grateful heart, called the place where God met her, "Thou God seest me." Children, is it an agreeable thought that God is always looking down into your hearts? If you were to *see* him enter the room this moment, would you run *to* him or *from* him? Hagar returned, and was very good until several years after the birth of little Ishmael.

Abram and Sarai thought he was the "promised son." They were anxiously looking for the Redeemer; and as Eve looked into the calm depths of the brown eyes of little Cain, the world's first baby, in joyful anticipation, saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," so did Hagar gaze into the dark depths of little Ishmael's with the same bright, mysterious hope. All the mothers, from Eve to Hagar, had been disappointed. Abram,

who had been blessed with a clearer, more decided promise than his predecessors, was sure that in Ishmael he saw the world's Redeemer.

Many nights, beside that hallowed tent-door, with the silver moonlight falling like a mantle of God's love around them, they wove bright fancies concerning the future. They knew they were sinners, and, in order to be redeemed, *blood must be shed*, yea, the blood of the Son of God. They knew that God must become man; and how did they know but little Ishmael was the promised one?

God, seeing Abram's thoughts, told him that he was mistaken—Ishmael was not the promised seed, but Sarai, his wife, should be the mother of the child. He then named the little one, and promised to make of Ishmael a great nation; but in "Isaac shall thy seed be called." At this time God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's to Sarah—a father and a mother of many nations would he make of them. He also gave at this time the ordinance of circumcision, which command Abraham obeyed that very day, performing the rite on his son.

Ishmael was now thirteen years old. A few months after this Isaac was born. Time flew swiftly, as it always does with happy or busy people, and soon little Isaac was old enough to be weaned.

Abraham, who seemed to be growing younger, made a great feast, and invited all his friends. The old couple were so happy! the baby, perhaps, rather indifferent. While the joy was at its height, Sarah accidentally saw Ishmael mocking and ridiculing; perhaps from envy or jealousy, it may be, he was instigated by his mother. Then Sarah's jealousy and anger arose, and she said to her husband, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; he shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

Abraham was greatly distressed at these family dissensions, and did all he could to keep the peace; but it is hard to manage *one* woman sometimes, and to argue with a jealous one is about as sensible as to quote Shakespeare to a *crevasse* in the Mississippi River. Sarah would listen to nothing but positive separation from the despised Hagar. Umph! Abraham "a father of many nations," when he cannot control two women! Poor man! Again he flies to God, his never-failing resort in time of trouble. God again repeats his promise, but commanded him to take Sarah's advice, and send them away.

God will not bless a household where every member is head, all making laws by which no one is governed. "Order is Heaven's first law"—God, in his eternal triunity—the Head governing all things, all the heavenly hosts, each doing his or

her duty in perfect harmony. Every wave of the ocean, every leaf of the forest, every star in heaven, has its place, and makes no war on the others. Man, sinful man, is the only discordant element in the universe. Sin cut the centripetal force of his nature—the line which bound him to the Father's heart—when Adam fell, and now he is off in a tangent from his home and his God. Jesus *alone*, on Calvary, caught the ends, tied them together, cemented them with his blood, and again started him on his long-forgotten orbit around his Maker.

Nothing is more displeasing to God than family quarrels. The next morning, by daylight, Abraham arose, gave Hagar a bottle of water and some bread, placing them on her shoulder himself; then embracing his eldest son, whom he still loved, sent them away, God only knew where. With his strong, granite-like faith, without a moment's hesitation, he threw them on the word of the everlasting God. This act of Abraham's was inevitable, under the circumstances, but he exhibited in it the selfishness that is inherent in our fallen human natures.

Had Sarah and Isaac been the ones sent off, he would have had a month's provisions laid up for them; he would have sent them away with a great caravan, camels, flocks, herds, servants. He ought to have made them all behave themselves.

There was in this primitive family, as in all of the present day, the elements of much earthly felicity. God wants his children to be happy; it is our duty to be so. It is a sin to go through the world with our heads hanging down, and our hearts full of woes of our own making mostly, when we have a Burden-bearer, a great Reservoir in which to cast all our cares—when there are thousands to be fed, clothed, comforted, and led to the fountain of ineffable joy.

Children, when you get Jesus in your hearts by faith, you have all that earth and heaven can give. Then, be happy. When will men learn to control their families as they ought? When will servants quit sneering at their superiors, and women cease to get “jealous over trifles light as air?” Again Hagar finds herself a homeless wanderer—this time with a little child for comfort. But, alas! that was a very *agonizing joy*. Not much *pleasure* in watching the sufferings of a perishing only child. The bread and the water were now exhausted—no nuts or berries near. What could they do?

When earth is all dark—as it must be to every one of us sometimes—when men are treacherous, health gone, all a blank, Heaven is still above. God still sits on his sapphire throne in calm serenity, holding the ribbons of the universe, and out of the chaos of every life, however humble, will

bring order and beauty, *if we trust him*. The hand of love, guided by wisdom, will take fragments of broken glass, arrange them according to certain laws, and behold we have the kaleidoscope to gladden the eye, and delight the hearts of the little ones. Our lives are broken, fragmentary, scattered—here our good and evil are strangely mingled. But a Hand will gather these broken fragments of good, and the memory of this life will become the kaleidoscope of the future. St. John was looking through it, in the light of heaven, and we have—the Apocalypse.

My dear children, without a living Christ in your hearts, you have dead souls. Better be in your coffins than in the world with dead spiritualities. How could Hagar be so desolate, and think her child would perish, when God says distinctly, I will make of him a great nation? How strange in her! we say. Well, there is one thing stranger still, and it is this: We, in the full blaze of this gospel-lighted century, sometimes feel as if we would never get through the world, and in the end we *may* miss heaven.

Have we accepted the conditions? complied with the terms? and do we claim the promises? Then there is not power enough in all God's vast creation to snatch us from the hands of Jesus. Hagar had supported the tottering footsteps of the boy as

long as she could, and now was so exhausted that she found it impossible to take another step; so, gathering up her feeble energies in desperation, she cast him under one of the shrubs to die. Children, have you ever felt that all was lost? that you were in a desert with no water or food to satisfy your hunger and thirst?

I tell you, in the name of my Master, that there is a well at your feet; not an empty one, but a perennial fountain, even the inexhaustible waters of life. Do you *believe* it? If not, I still insist that it is there, though you shall not taste of it. Look above you: on those green branches on the tree of life is a cup called faith; the precious promises have been hung there. Now drink to your entire satisfaction from the wells of salvation.

Unbelieving Hagar! Don't you know that he cannot die? Don't you know that a dagger run through his heart would not kill him? That child might lie there twenty years, and never starve. There is no power on earth or in heaven that can touch the life of that helpless boy. Did not Abraham, a few years afterward, try to kill Isaac, and God's angel interposed and saved him? "I will make of him a great nation," therefore every instrumentality brought against his life shall be harmless until the great nation is made. *Then* the weapons of death may be of service.

O Christian! Jesus, the coëternal Son, has said 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Are we his children? Then all the implements ever forged for man's destruction will strike this polished shield of truth, and fall harmless at our feet. Hagar, having thrown the child, and *with him her faith in God, down to die*, dragged her weary body some distance out of sight, and sat down and wept, O so bitterly! Sisters out in the wilderness of sin, chasing the glittering pleasures of worldliness, is not this your case? Do you not sometimes weep bitterly because you have thrown away your faith in God?

Alone in the world! To be an only child is a sad lot in life; to be an orphan is worse; but the desolation of homelessness is the saddest feeling the heart can experience. The saddest words on the pages of sacred history are these: "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Born in a stable not his own, spending so many hours in dreary solitude on the mountain-tops of a world belonging to the wicked one, finally dying and lying in some one else's tomb in death—all that we might inherit a mansion eternal in the heavens.

While little Ishmael lies there crying and trying to pray, his mother, lying down to die, just out of sight, hears a voice out of heaven, and recognizes

it as that of the angel who comforted her on a similar occasion, about fourteen years before. He said, in surprise, in her greatest extremity, "What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand." Then again he repeats the promise.

Now "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottle with water;" and the lad drank, *in answer to his faith, not his mother's; hers was gone when she cast him down to die.* O what beautiful lessons cluster around this little incident in the lives of these sorely tried ones!

When we make an alum-basket, we make the foundation of wire, then set it in a bucket of strong alum-water to remain all night. The little crystals of alum, by a law of attraction peculiar to themselves, settle on the wire, in the form of octagons, every one perfectly formed. Nature always turns out perfect work. So it is with every fact of Bible history. Each incident is a solid wire-work of truth, around which crystallize many beautiful thoughts, all glittering and sparkling in the rays falling from the Sun of righteousness.

Hagar, like so many of us, was mourning over her perishing condition, while a well of pure water was at her feet. She did not see it *till she looked*

up. Children, always *look up*. Every thing good, pure, and holy, *is up* beyond the clouds and gloom of doubts and fears engendered by a want of faith. Fire is purer than air, hence its flames go upward; smoke, the gases, the holy aspirations of the soul, the spirit departing from the body, Jesus at the ascension—all went Godward—that is, away from earth. Then let us always look up.

“And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.”

I know not if Abraham ever saw his son after this cruel separation—perhaps not. God verified his promise to Hagar in making of him a great nation. He told Abraham, before his birth, that he should be the father of twelve princes. The fierce Bedouin, and the waning but still glowing splendors of Mohammedan power, attest that the promises of Jehovah are steadfast; and to this day the lawless, wandering tribes of Bedouins and bushmen of Arabia are a living, fighting attestation of the way Jehovah keeps his word. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.” Their hand is still against every man, and every man’s hand against them.

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, speaks of Sarah and Hagar, comparing the descendants of the former to the children of the kingdom, and those of the latter to the children

of the world. As Ishmael, the son after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, the son of promise, so do the children of the flesh still persecute the children born after the Spirit. As Ishmael was driven out because he ridiculed Isaac, so will God drive into outer darkness the sons of bondage because they ridicule and scorn his spiritual, blood-washed children of adoption.

In our own hearts and lives we have our Ishmael and Isaac. If we obey the voice of the flesh, and live for the seen and perishing, we have not sent our Ishmael into the wilderness to perish. If, on the other hand, we care most for our spiritual and eternal interests, and are living holy lives, "hid with Christ in God," then Isaac rules our hearts, and we are safe. Live for heaven. Take Jesus, and we are safe for time and eternity.

ISAAC.

“Children, obey your parents.” Eph. vi. 1. “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Ex. xx. 12.

AS children of our Heavenly Father, our obedience, like Abraham’s, must be perfect—that is, prompt, uncomplaining, proceeding from trustful love. Our submission must be like Isaac’s—unresisting, springing from perfect faith in a father’s love.

Isaac signifies laughter. Abraham laughed for joy when God promised him a son. Sarah laughed because she thought it impossible. Isaac was perhaps thirteen years of age when the following incident in his life took place—the only thing we know of his childhood, save that when he was weaned, his parents made a great feast. At this feast Ishmael mocked and ridiculed the proceedings, and was sent away in consequence of it. How early in life that most powerful, invisible thing, called influence, begins!

When Ishmael, the son of Sarah’s handmaid, was born, Abraham supposed that he was the prom-

ised son. Not so. Ten, twelve, thirteen years passed away, still "Abraham's faith staggered not." Finally the little, incredulous joy came. He grew in strength and beauty, the petted and beloved of all. The old man loved his God more and more every day. The little boy was taught to love and trust his Maker, by precept often repeated, backed by a powerful example.

How happy this little household band must have been! But, alas! like a clap of thunder from a clear sky came the startling command to Abraham *to slay his Isaac with his own hand*. "Abraham!" Promptly came the reply, "Behold, here I am." "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains I will tell thee of." Abraham might have argued that, leaving his love entirely out of the question, to kill his son would be a sin; besides, his mother would certainly die of grief, thus making a double murder.

He might have said, "God has promised to bless all the nations of the earth through him. I am rich, have hundreds of sheep, and cattle in abundance. I will offer up a lamb without blemish. I am mistaken. God does not mean for me to offer up my Isaac." Most of us would have found *some* way out of so painful a dilemma.

Not a word of reasoning from Abraham. Instantly, without informing the little one where he was going—for *in those days people did not consult their children in regard to their duty*—Abraham saddled his ass, took two of his young men, and Isaac, went out, cut the wood, and went into the mountains. O the sad heart of that aged father as, with tottering limbs and head covered with grave-blossoms, he winds his way over the hills and valleys of the Holy Land!

Here was Isaac, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, actually going upon the mountain-top to be killed by his father! What is to become of the promise? How is it to be fulfilled? Surely something is wrong. All right so far, friend Abraham. But what does God mean? In vain such questions rise up in the mind of the "friend of God." But the command is clear, distinct, and decided, and he dares not even think of disobeying.

Holy Spirit, drive the beautiful, unquestioning faith of Abraham from my heart, while I try to show forth the meek submission of Isaac. The little boy trudged along by the side of his aged father, laughing and talking, plucking flowers, in happy ignorance of his approaching doom. Short, tender, and sad, must have been the answers to his numerous questions.

I sometimes wish that Moses had given us some of the conversation between Abraham and Isaac during that never-to-be-forgotten journey. After traveling three days, they arrived at the appointed place, and Abraham said to the two men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the *lad* will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son." Even so did the sin of the world rest upon the human shoulders of Christ, and cheerfully he bore it, "despising the shame."

"And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." According to the sacred narrative, there is no word of complaint from the gentle boy, and thus far he had displayed no curiosity. Father and I are going to worship our God, and do not want the prying eyes of our servants on us; therefore we left them. Father says I must carry the wood to burn the offering; he is old and feeble—I am young and strong. He has taught me to love and honor him. In other words, father did it, and it is right.

Coming to this conclusion, he looked up in surprise, and said, "My father." O how tender! Steel thy heart, old man—take a stronger hold on God—or thy faith will fail thee, as these words of ineffable tenderness fall from the innocent lips of

the child. His father said, "Here am I, my son." And he said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" O the beautiful innocence and ignorance of childhood! How often do they make our hearts ache! and we must force back the tears, smile, and answer, indirectly, their close questioning.

Dear children, flowers of earth! how could we live without them? There was deep meaning in the touching words of Jesus, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Better for me "to have a mill-stone about my neck, and be cast into the sea," than to write one word in this book that would offend one of Christ's little ones. I am glad there was an *infant* Jesus—I am glad there was a "man of sorrows," who took the little ones in his arms, and blessed them, saying, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb." They walked on a little farther, till they reached the appointed place, the spot on which Solomon's temple was built several hundred years afterward. Arriving there, Abraham laid down the knife, took the wood from Isaac's shoulders, and together they collected stones, and built an altar. Isaac, happy in his employment, looked up in the stern, rigid, but ever-loving face of his

father; but he could read no answer to his questioning look. Finally all was in order—the last stone laid on the altar, the wood piled up, the fire and knife lying on the ground near them. All things ready but the lamb. Ah! many times have we all things *but the essential one*. *There are people who have all the elements of a Christian character but the living Christ on the altars of their hearts.*

Abraham sent from his heart a last agonizing prayer, too deep to find utterance in words, and took the little one in his arms, and, after taking a last kiss, he bound him to the altar—the boy still resigned, but now quite astonished, as the thought for the first time flashed across his mind that he is the lamb to be offered in sacrifice. What a fearful moment! He loved life. He was the *only* son—Ishmael was dead to them. He enjoyed the beautiful sunshine, the flowers, and birds. He loved his old mother and gray-haired father. But we hear no murmur—he is *as submissive as his father is brave*. His passive suffering is more beautiful and grand than Abraham's actual work. Christ is more glorious in what he *suffered*, and for those things *he did not do, than for the activities of his life*. He held with a mighty power the omnipotence of a God within the little compass of a man's small frame. That he did not destroy sin-

ners is more wonderful than his blessings on believers.

Abraham, having pressed to his aching heart his little one the last time, and bound him to the altar, 'took the knife to slay his son.' As we see it flashing in the morning sunbeams, just above the resigned face, our hearts stop beating, and we ask ourselves the question, Why, O why must the innocent ever suffer for the guilty?

Abraham had doubtless offered up hundreds of animals—surely God is exacting to demand his son, the child of his old age, the one in whom all the earth were to be blessed, by his own especial covenant. While these thoughts are passing through the father's mind—not of unbelief, but of simple human curiosity, for his faith never wavered—the boy lay trembling, knowing that the moment the death-blow came from an earthly father's hand, the everlasting arms of a Heavenly Father would enfold him.

Now the sacrifice is complete, so far as these two are concerned. In his heart Abraham sees his son on the altar *dead*, and the smoke, as it sends its blue, curling waves heavenward on the morning air, envelops the loved form—he is no more to behold here. But his guardian angel, listening in breathless attention, hears no murmur. Closely examining that sorely-tried heart, he finds nothing

but a perfect obedience, proceeding from a perfect love for God.

Grief for the loss of so precious a treasure he feels keenly, of course, but high above all feelings of selfishness rises the sublime thought, I have obeyed God—I have given him my most precious gift, even my Isaac. I care not for the promise—God can take care of his word in his own way. Thus thought Abraham. Isaac, grandly submissive, lay there quietly, awaiting the blow. Ah! we have all been on our altars waiting for blows from God's hand which never came.

While Abraham stands thus, unconsciously forming one of the grandest *tableaux* the angels ever witnessed, with his knife above his son, a quick, stern, impatient whisper is heard in some bushes near him: "Abraham, Abraham!" Too bad, this interruption. Why not let the blow descend, now that his heart is nerved to strike it? But "God's ways are not as our ways." The answer came quickly, "Here am I." And the voice said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Then was faith perfected by bringing forth the act of obedience—faith the bud, obedience the blossom.

Looking around, he saw a ram with his horns

fastened in a thicket, which he joyfully offered instead of his son. This picture, so *living* and beautiful, brings before us the whole scheme of man's redemption. Abraham may have seen and appreciated it. Abraham, as he stands, represents stern, inflexible justice, with drawn sword, ready to plunge it into the heart of guilty man, as he lies there in the person of Isaac. Jesus, in the form of the ram hid in the thicket, appears, receives the blow—justice is satisfied, man is free, Jesus has suffered.

The preachers tell this story so beautifully sometimes, then expatiate largely on Abraham's transcendent faith. They say Isaac was thirty-three years of age, but the Bible says lad, and lad means boy. Abraham's faith is glorious; but how about Isaac's? How about a submissive, passive obedience? *Doing* the will of God is one thing, *suffering* his will is another; of the two, the former is much the easier. We love to read this beautiful story. We feel that it strengthens us in the performance of religious duty.

Dear old Abraham! we love thy descendants, in spite of the terrible tragedy of Calvary, and the present denial of our Lord, for to them we are indebted for all the story, from Adam to the apocalyptic vision on Patmos; and we do earnestly pray for the time when "a nation shall be born in a

day," and we hope that nation will be the scattered remains of Israel. In this story it is difficult to decide which we admire most—the father's faith, the son's submission, or the glorious reward to both actors in the scene.

How the holy life of Isaac ever gives substantial praises to God for his great deliverance! Surely "God knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." Isaac has been called a type of our Saviour. As *he* went, bearing the wood for the sacrifice on his back, to the top of Mount Moriah, so Jesus bore the cross for the sin of the world. Isaac was the son of promise, so was Jesus. Both were *willing* sacrifices. Both were laid on the altar by a father's hand. Here the similarity ceases. Isaac did not suffer, but in the extreme moment was delivered, and went home to his mother rejoicing.

When the cruel executors of the law—fit representatives of our sins—laid the dear Jesus on his altar, no voice from heaven arrested their attention, bidding them stay their murderous hands; no ram hid in a thicket was offered instead; but the blow, in all its crushing, sickening agony, came.

While I was relating the wonderful story of the cross in Sabbath-school, a little girl, with large tears ready to start, said, "O I wish I could have been there, and could have killed those bad men

for doing our dear Saviour so!" "No, my dear child; your sins and mine drove the nails—our transgressions sharpened the spear—and to-day, if you reject him, and fail to cast behind you all unbelief, *you* are as guilty—yea, more so, than the actual murderers of the Son of God."

With one dread stroke the hand that framed the universe and set the stars to moving was clinched to that cross, as helpless as yours or mine would have been. A superstition prevails in the East that the leaves of the Lombardy poplar tree turned white on that terrible day, and have ever since been wailing a low, solemn dirge, *in memoriam*. The cross was made of poplar. This is seemingly a little thing to remember, in comparison to so many great ones; but, dear children, your smallest thought of Christ contains glory enough to make an angel's wing quiver with delight.

I want you, in the smallest things, to *see* and *feel* the presence of God. When you hear the low, solemn moan of the poplar, and see the ashy paleness of its leaves, think of the sufferings Jesus endured for you. Yes, dear boys and girls, I would have you fly your kites and dress your dolls under the *felt* smile of a loving Father in heaven. The head of Jesus bent in agony that *we* might, all rolled up in his merits, approach boldly the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. He hung there three long

hours, amid the mocking, jeering multitude, that he might blaze the way to heaven with his own blood.

We are not surprised at the quaking earth, the opening graves, the rending vail, the blackness over the earth; the wonder is that, with the expiring God-man, all nature did not go back to its original chaos. We *are* surprised at the Father hiding his face. "God wrapping our humanity" around his divinity did not seem so great, but the unwrapping was fearful. On the cross there were no cheering words of "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." All this agony the result of a woman eating an apple four thousand years before—a very little thing, but mighty in its disastrous results. *Disobedience* did it.

Then, dear children, beware of little sins. Every thing is small in the beginning. If so little a sin cost so great a sacrifice, let us cast it out of our hearts, and invite the Saviour in—not as an occasional visitor, but an abiding guest. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." What a glorious thought! How it staggers our finite minds! The God who rules the universe condescends to enter a little child's heart, prompt all his acts, dictate his words, purify his thoughts—finally take him in his arms safe to glory. Jesus entered

the grave to conquer death, that we might enjoy all the privileges of that conquest.

Dear children, like Abraham, the faithful "friend of God," let us lay our most precious things on the altar of sacrifice. Like Isaac, the son of promise, let us be submissive to the will of our Heavenly Father, ever ready to be, to do, or to suffer, for him—ever remembering that we "are not our own, but that we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ."



ESAU AND JACOB.

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” Heb. xi. 20.

ISAAC, the son of Abraham and Sarah, was forty years old when he married the beautiful Rebekah. Years passed slowly away, and no little glimpses of heaven, in the way of babies, came to gladden their lives, and stir up the depths of paternal and maternal tenderness in their hearts. They loved each other very much, but there was a vacancy in their home that was growing more oppressive as they passed down the shady side of the hill of life.

After twenty years had dragged their slow length along, Isaac went to his God, who had so mysteriously saved his life in childhood, and besought him, with great earnestness and faith, to give him a son. O God, remember thy promise to Abraham, my father! Thou didst say, “I will bless Isaac; his seed shall be as the sands of the sea for multitude.” Lord, I am sixty years old, and have no child. I have waited long and patiently for a fulfillment of thy words. I know thou art true.

Verify now thy promise; I believe thou wilt—thou art able. Yea, the thing is done—in thy mind the promise is fulfilled.

God heard his prayer, and gave him a double blessing, in the persons of Esau and Jacob. God always acts thus when his children *really pray*. He takes the *desire* of their hearts, and embodies it, or gives them grace to be disappointed, in order to brighten the joys of the hereafter.

The eldest son, Esau, was an ugly little fellow, looking more like an animal than any thing else. He was red, and covered all over with thick, short hair. Jacob, the younger, was a fat, fair-faced, bald-headed baby, with smooth skin, brown eyes, little rose-bud mouth, made for kissing purposes. Before their birth Rebekah had prayed a great deal, and on one occasion God informed her that she should be the mother of two great nations—that the elder should serve the younger—that he would hate the one and love the other.

In saying this, God only told Rebekah what, in his foreknowledge, he saw. Because he foresaw what Esau and Jacob would do, it does not follow that he compelled them to do it. Children, God created and predestined you for heaven before the foundations of the world were laid. Accept the terms—that is, take Jesus for your everlasting portion. “God *willeth* not the death of any, but that

all may come unto him and be saved." The farmer sows his seed; he knows all will not yield fruit, but he did not predestine the loss of a single grain, though he knows that handfuls of it will rot beneath the soil—handfuls will come up to be withered and scorched by the sun's rays. Accept Jesus, and keep on clinging to him, and no man, angel, or devil, can pluck you out of my Father's hand.

Had Rebekah been one of those honorable, high-minded women, above deceit, like Ruth or Esther, how different would have been the lives of both her sons! God might, in mercy, have been led to make glorious both their lives. A man with a panorama can tell what the pictures will be, though he will be unable to make them different; so in the panorama of our lives, God knows and tells what the pictures in the lives of every Esau and Jacob will be, but the hand of Deity can alter the picture his eye foresees. There are some things God cannot do without *ungodding* himself—one is, convert a man against his will. Are not the vices of the mother given like birth-marks to the soul of Jacob?

Was not Rebekah a supplanter before Jacob was one? The world is filled with Jacobs to-day, wronging their brothers; but there would be no Jacobs were there no Rebekahs. It is not neces-

sary to hunt an Isaiah to prophesy that a drunkard's son will love whisky, or that a foolish woman of fashion will never give to the world a Sir Isaac Newton to bless mankind. Is there an American silly enough to say that little Miss Jackson, daughter of our own "Stonewall," will ever grow into a trifling woman, a disgrace to the name? No; she will live to reflect renewed luster on the grand old name of Jackson—not only because God "shows mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments"—not only because the promises are "unto you and to your children," but because a mother, holy and true, has implanted qualities in her character—traits which will be for the glory of God and the good of the world.

As a Protestant, I have a God-given right to read my Bible, and form my own conclusions, prayerfully, submitting humbly to the guidance of that Holy Spirit who has said, "I will guide you into all truth." I am simply exercising that right when I believe and teach that Esau was a better boy than Jacob. The latter received the cool, calculating selfishness of Rebekah. The first lies he ever told were at her express command. The quarrels between these two brothers began instinctively at their birth. The first act of Jacob's life was to reach forth his little hand and catch Esau's heel.

Isaac and Rebekah were very proud of their boys, and loved them dearly. Isaac loved Esau for the funniest of all reasons—"because he did eat of his venison;" whereas Rebekah loved the pretty little Jacob, the supplanter. Time passed on, and Esau became a cunning hunter, spending much of his time in the woods with his bow and arrows. He often brought home game, and cooked it nicely for his father. The old man enjoyed these little attentions, and they are the straws in Esau's character showing which way the winds of unselfishness and kindly feeling were blowing.

Jacob usually hung around the tent with his mother. He was one of those good (?) boys, who never do wrong when there is a possibility of discovery. He was naturally cunning, deceitful, and treacherous, and he made no effort to be otherwise. Esau was full of generous, noble impulses. He was high-tempered and impetuous—would strike you on the face, then make a manly apology, and do all he could to repair the mischief. Jacob possessed a principle in human nature for which we all have a contempt, but still feel we would like to possess—*policy*.

While this family was living in harmony, one day Esau, as usual, went hunting, and, on his return, carried his game to his mother, threw his bow

and arrows on the ground, and sat down on a mat. Jacob was serenely cooking the noonday-meal—that is, he “sod pottage.” This pottage is a kind of gumbo, or soup, made of lentils, a bean growing in that country. He cooked it with oil and garlic. Esau, as he sat there almost tired to death, watched Jacob cooking, and, as the children say, “his mouth watered” for some of the savory mess. Jacob saw Esau’s tired, hungry expression, but went on with his work. If he had been the saintly creature that the preachers manufacture for the edification and example of their congregations, he would have taken a large spoonful (I suppose spoons were fashionable then) of this delightful mess, and held it to his mouth, saying, “Here, brother Esau, eat this while it is nice and warm; you look so fatigued; you do wrong to stay out so long. Is this pottage nice? or shall I put in a little more garlic? Perhaps more oil would improve it.”

Esau would have smiled, “Thank you, brother Jacob; it is the nicest I ever ate; it is so kind in you to offer it to me. No, I thank you, no more; I feel quite strong now. Brother Jacob, I killed a fine deer, and when I rest awhile we will cook some of it. Father enjoys the venison I make for him so much.”

That would have been a conversation worthy of

record, and so brotherly in Jacob, the father of the patriarchs in prospective.

Esau sat some time, longing for one mouthful, then said, Give me some of that red pottage. Jacob, seeing what an advantage he had over the poor, tired boy, said quickly, "Sell me this day thy birthright." This was the meanest thing he could have said. Poor, tired Esau! you are not the only one who has been cheated out of your rights by a brother. Weak as he was, he hesitated a moment, then said, I am about to die of hunger; what profit is the birthright to me? Yes, I will give it to you for a mess of pottage. So Esau despised his birthright, and sold it, and Jacob cheated him out of it.

Ah, Esau! reflect one moment. God has said two great nations will be made of you two boys. You *cannot* die till God has accomplished his purpose with you. You may live a year, and never see a morsel of food. You may be put in the fire, in the water, anywhere, but Death, brave and unconquerable as he appears to be, cannot touch you. The lions never opened their mouths when Daniel was their guest—God's design had not been completed. The Hebrew children walked about amid the curling flames, and came out untouched. Jonah refused to digest when the whale swallowed him. The crocodile never touched a finger of "the good-

ly child," as he lay weeping on the banks of the river Nile. Wicked men tried to take Jesus, and fell on their faces. After the design was accomplished, they crucified him. After the great nation is made, then you may perish, Esau, but not before.

It is impossible for a Gentile to fully understand or appreciate the value of this birthright. There were many and peculiar blessings attached to it. The eldest son received a double portion of the father's estate; was adviser and counselor in the absence or sickness of his parents; was a priest of God; was consecrated to his service, and somehow the great blessing was to descend through his line. These privileges were sometimes forfeited on account of misconduct, as in the case of Reuben. Esau sold the great honor of being ancestor to our Saviour "for a mess of pottage."

Jacob and Esau both understood, in all its rich spirituality of meaning, this blessed privilege. Jacob's cunning was more than a match for Esau's honesty. Jacob's sin was willful meanness; Esau's, momentary physical weakness.

Boys, in hours of bodily suffering, hold on to Jesus. When tempted to steal the rich blessings of another, remember Jesus. Jacob was sorely punished in after-life for the treachery and double-dealing of his youth. Esau suffered, repented, and

went down to the grave in sorrow for one moment's weakness.

Children, be strong and earnest. All heaven is on your side. Omnipotence is enlisted for you, and will give you power to conquer every foe, and break down all obstacles.



JOSEPH.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. viii. 28.

JACOB, the son of Isaac, and twin-brother of Esau, served Laban seven years for Rachel, then had the ugly Leah palmed off on him; but, faithfully loving Rachel, he served another seven years—all this time living with her father.

In the olden time, among the Jews, women considered children as a kind of tangible, crystallized smile of God in their homes, and the absence of these little life-rejuvenators was considered a positive affliction, and sure sign of God's displeasure; and women prayed for children just as they would for any other great blessing; and when they were given, in answer to the prayer of faith, instead of being made *walking advertisements for the merchants, milliners, and jewelers*, they were trained in the duties that prepared them for eternity. God gave them straight from heaven, and they were expected to return and spend the eternal ages with him in glory. In those days it was an honor to train an immortal soul for God.

The beautiful Rachel had no children for several years, and she was getting quite jealous of her sister Leah, as she saw her little Simeon, Reuben, Levi, and Judah, playing their boyish pranks around their father's knee. Rachel knew that somehow the great God of the universe was to wrap himself in our humanity—be born, live, suffer, and die, for the redemption of Israel, and, naturally, she wished him to descend in her line instead of her sister's.

By and by, when Jacob was getting old, Rachel's beauty fading—perhaps their love, so warm and true in youth, growing cold—little Joseph came, like the holy sacrament, a tender memory and a bright hope realized. I can well imagine the joy of the family as the child lay in the arms of his mother. How the boys rejoiced—ten in number—to see the little bundle of pink humanity, as he was handed around among them to be admired and examined! How young Jacob felt! A new lease of life seemed to have been given him. Zilpah, Leah, Bilhah—all perhaps came to rejoice with their husband. That “babe in the house was indeed a well-spring of pleasure.”

Time passed on, and the tendrils of Jacob's heart began to twine around the boy, to the exclusion of the other children. His wives—Leah, the good, and Rachel, the beautiful—were almost for-

gotten in the great love he bore for the infant Joseph. Take care, old man! the Lord thy God is a jealous God. He will not reign in a divided heart. Thou knowest, though the commandments are not yet written, that he said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

People in those days told the truth, and tradition was reliable. There were no appearances to be kept up, therefore not so much necessity (?) for insincerity. Your father Isaac told you the command, therefore untwine the affections of that faithful heart before it is too late. What a lesson Jacob's life ought to be to men of all ages who are inclined to love one child more than the others! Jacob went so far as to show his unjust partiality in making little Joseph a coat of many colors. I wonder if the boys of the nineteenth century ever try to imagine how he looked in his fancy coat? How was it made? How many colors were there? And did he walk around and admire himself as boys of the present do? He had no mirror to reflect his gorgeous image; he may have arranged his toilet by the margin of some quiet stream. Why did not Rachel make it? And did he say, Aha! father has made me a fancy coat; he loves me best? These were his feelings—I suppose he expressed them in the Hebrew language, "as boys will be boys," and must torment each other when

there are no girls around. Of course his brothers became jealous, and, to increase this feeling, Joseph began to dream strange dreams, and was unwise enough to tell them.

He dreamed one night that they were all out in the field binding sheaves, and the sheaves of his brethren made obeisance to his sheaf. They reported this to their father, who said nothing, of course. The favorite son in a family seems to have a perfect right to be as disagreeable as he pleases.

At another time Joseph dreamed that the sun, moon, and stars, bowed down to him. It made no difference to Jacob about the sheaves, but when the sun, moon, and stars, made obeisance, he, quickly interpreting it to mean himself and wife, rebuked Joseph.

Thus we see the parental authority over the favorite son, also the selfishness of Jacob. He did not care how much Joseph worried the other children, so long as he did not interfere with him. These other children were the sons of Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah. He did not love them much, either for themselves or their mothers' sake.

Jacob's sons, though rich, were compelled to work. A boy who idles away his time is a pest, a nuisance, a mortifying sore on the body of humanity. Boys, if you are poor, work; earn your living by the sweat of your brow: every sweat-drop

brought out by honorable toil is a precious pearl in the sight of God and his holy angels. Die in preference to being dependent on rich relatives! If God, in his mercy, has given you a sufficiency of this world's goods, down on your knees and pour out your soul in thankful prayer; then get up and embody that prayer in honest work, and spend your earnings for the glory of that God who gave you strength to toil for him. When I see a lazy boy, I feel a strange longing to take away his powers for usefulness, and give them to those who will use them to advantage. You all will have to give a strict account of how you have used here your hands, your feet, your heart, and brain.

One day these boys were out tending their father's flocks, and remained so long that Jacob became uneasy, and Joseph (the pet, papa's darling—I know he must have been trifling then—what right had he to be staying at home while the others were at work?) was sent to see what had become of them. So off he started in his many-colored coat. He wandered about for some time, and, seeing a man, he inquired if he had seen some young men watching a flock of sheep. Yes, said the stranger, I heard them talking, and one said they were going to Dothan.

Joseph walked on, and, coming in sight of his brothers, Satan entered their hearts, and they be-

gan to plan his murder. Here we begin to tremble for the boy. The odds are fearfully against him—ten against one. Will he now remind them of his father's love for him? Reuben, a little braver than the rest, said, Let us not kill him; we will put him in a pit, and leave him there to starve. In his heart he hoped the lad would escape.

After considerable talk, the others agreed to this plan. A death by starvation in a pit was more respectable than cold-blooded murder. They would be rid of him and his dying agonies, which would have been disagreeable to these saintly patriarchs—in prospective. So they—ten to one, for Benjamin was not with them—stripped his beautiful coat off of him, and put him in a pit, or deep well. Satan triumphed then, grandly; but the wrath of man shall praise our God—good shall overturn all evil. Be as wicked as you please—your very sins shall bring glory to his name, for the Lord our God hath spoken it.

After this Satanish transaction, they coolly sat down and ate bread. Judas ate bread with Jesus while his black heart was planning his murder. That performance must go on, in joy or sorrow, all the same. Adam and Eve started the fashion, as they ate the uncooked bread-fruit of Eden, and we still follow it. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant, alike, must eat.

After these nine men—for I will except Reuben; he wanted to save the boy's life—had committed murder in their hearts, and were rejoicing over it, they looked up and saw a company of Ishmaelites (merchāntmen) coming. A bright thought struck Judah—if there can be brightness in sin; so he proposed to sell him. The brethren agreed to it. Then there passed by Midianites (merchants); and they drew him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

When Reuben saw that he was not in the pit, horror and remorse for his cowardice and unmanly conduct seized him, and he began to tear his clothes and mourn when too late. They then killed a kid, and dipped Joseph's beautiful coat in the blood, and carried it home to their father. He said, Perhaps my son has been devoured by some wild beast. Jacob believed this, and mourned long and bitterly for his favorite son. O the tears that have been wrung from the hearts of parents because of undutiful sons!

Jacob is now reaping the whirlwind of sorrow he sowed in his youth, when he played around his mother's door with his brother Esau. He lied to his *father* while that father lay on his dying-bed, now the falsehoods of *his* sons are to bring down *his* gray hairs in sorrow to the grave.

O boys! in early life sow seeds of immortal joy.

by doing good all the day long, and it certainly will return to you in after years. I have not much sympathy for Jacob. He should not have shown so plainly his partiality for Joseph, creating enmity in the hearts of his brothers. I knew the fancy coat would make mischief. I have heard harsh words in my Sabbath-school class, before my eyes, from little girls dressed in calico to little ones dressed better.

Jacob's grief was so great that all his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him. O the deceitfulness of the human heart! who can know it? Every day and every hour we need the blood of Jesus applied by faith to our hearts. While Jacob was mourning over the loss of Joseph, and his deceitful sons were trying to comfort him, Joseph was slowly and sadly traveling with his master to the most civilized and powerful country on earth, there to find a varied experience of joy and sorrow.

How that beautiful coat of his typifies his life, and every Joseph among us! As we tread our pathway through the darkness of this world, do we not all find ourselves clothed in a parti-colored coat, woven by a Father's hand, with here a black thread of bereavement, there a gray one of disappointment, ever and anon the dingy, faded colors of sorrow mingling with the golden-hued ones of joy, and the silvery beauties of unexpected deliver-

ance? O Lord, dip these variegated coats of ours in the blood of the slain Lamb, and purify us day by day!

Poor boy! how humble he now feels! All the good he ever heard from his father—all the love he ever felt for him—rushes through his soul now. He thinks too of his mother—how she died, and left little Benjamin to the care of his father. His whole life comes before him. He feels resentment at the conduct of his brethren. He repents of his foolishness in telling those silly dreams. Finally they arrive in Egypt, and again he is sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of the guard.

In reading the Bible, it seems that the brethren were thrown in to make a dark background, to show to better advantage the beautiful character of Joseph. We regret the unmanly course pursued by Judah. We expected better things of the great ancestor of our Saviour. But the twelve sons of Jacob were only twelve earthen vessels, containing a little of the breath of the Almighty. "God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Joseph too was a sinner, and as such the blood of Jesus, after four thousand years, was to be shed. His career in Egypt was a most beautiful and successful one. He bore the darkness of the dungeon, the foul

slanders of his enemies, the forgetfulness of friends, with equal fortitude. He was faithful, honest, and true. At the height of prosperity, the second man in the kingdom, holding the keys to all the food in the land, he was not unduly elated, and never took advantage of his high position to be insolent and overbearing.

Those who lived before Christ looked down the coming ages, through the crimson blood of pigeons, goats, heifers, and sheep, to the *true blood* that was to flow—the precious Lamb to be slain on Calvary. They loved and trusted Jesus as we do, only they looked forward—we backward; like a magnificent arch, Jesus the center, the keystone that unites, strengthens, and perfects the whole structure. The very initiation into the synagogue was a bloody rite, pointing to Jesus. Now water has taken the place of all this blood. There is no longer use for types and symbols, because we have the precious reality.

I know not how others may regard the character of Joseph, but for his purity, ready forgiveness of his brothers, fidelity to his king, and love for his God, he took a firm hold on my heart when, as a child, I first read the beautiful story. I love Moses for his meekness, Enoch for that blessed walk, Job for his patience, Abraham for his faith, Paul for his courage and conscientiousness, John

for his sweetness, Peter for his candor; but of all characters of sacred history, I love Joseph best, because he is most like Jesus.

In teaching this lesson, I sometimes fail to show the blackness of the crime committed by the brethren, so intense becomes my interest in teaching the virtues of Joseph.



MIRIAM.

“Think not in that hour what ye shall say. It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit that is in you.”

THE Hebrews were living in Egypt, and another King Pharaoh, Amosis by name, who “knew not Joseph,” sat upon the throne. The Egyptians, at this time, were the most enlightened people on earth—that is, they understood the arts and sciences better. They excelled all others in wealth, talent, and refinement. They were all that a nation could be who had no God.

The king had forgotten the services rendered by the virtuous Joseph, who had long been dead. The Hebrews were a strong, healthy race of people, entirely different from other nations, and the king compelled them to work hard on all manner of field-work. They built large treasure-cities, and some historians assert that they built those immense piles of architecture known as the Pyramids, one of the seven wonders of the world. When the straw with which they made mortar was exhausted, they were compelled by their cruel task-masters to go into the fields for stubble; and still, with or

without straw, the daily tale of the bricks must be given. They were made to serve with rigor, and they groaned by reason of hard bondage. Ah! if we could see the tears which trickled down the cheeks of God's favored ones, and fell on those immense mountains of stone, how sad we would feel!

In spite of hard work, cruel oppression, and the task-master's lash, they still worshiped the God of all the earth, and looked for a better day. Their numbers increased rapidly.

During this time of bitterness of soul, Miriam, the eldest child and only daughter of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi, was born. The name signifies rebellion, perhaps in prophetic reference to her unjust rebellion against her brother Moses. Perhaps Jochebed felt her own heart rising against the injustice done her race. Miriam heard from the first many stories of cruelty. It may be her own father often came home with his back scarred and bleeding from the merciless lash of the task-master. Her little heart early learned to sympathize with the miseries of her people. Then too she had daily recitals of God's goodness. The whole treasury of heavenly knowledge was laid up in the hearts of the Hebrews. Miriam knew the history of the creation of the world, the flood, and Noah's wonderful ride over the roaring

waters. Her mother had told her of Abraham's call to leave his people, go into a strange land, and become "the friend of God." Her eyes had often kindled with indignation as she heard how Ishmael mocked the pretty little Isaac. Her cheeks crimsoned with delight as she heard again and again of how Isaac was offered up as a burnt-offering by his gray-haired father.

No wonder she was interested in these stories—they were her forefathers, and in all ages of the world people have been proud of a noble ancestry. Miriam's life was a hard one from her infancy, but she had a kind, loving mother, who trained her carefully, in spite of the degraded condition of the people. Belonging to the tribe of Levi, she was better educated than she otherwise would have been. The Levite was always an educated man, and to him was committed the oracles of God. He was a sacred character, standing above the other eleven tribes.

The Bible mentions Miriam's name in several places as being a lady of considerable distinction—indeed, what Moses was to the men of Israel, Miriam was to the women—a leader whom all were glad to follow. After the passage over the Red Sea, they had a kind of concert, Moses leading the men in songs of praises and religious dances, while Miriam led the women. Only one circumstance

of her childhood is given—that is sufficient to point the way to a noble character.

When she was nine years old, Aaron was born, of which no special mention is made. When about twelve years old, the slavery of her people was almost unbearable. Then the king issued orders that all male children should be drowned in the river as soon as they were born. Thus perished many little infants. At this time Moses was born. He was from the first the finest type of our Saviour, being so beautiful that the eyes of eighteen centuries have lingered with delight over his infant character. He, when under the direct influence of the Holy Ghost, said he was “a proper child.” Luke, inspired in the same way, calls him “a goodly child.” “The babe wept” in the arms of a princess, and was so lovely that it secured him a home in the palace. Josephus speaks of his beauty. God had a special object in view in making him so perfect. What a pity to throw away so much loveliness! we say. Poor Jochebed! how her heart bled for her boy! How she prayed and wept as she hushed his cries for fear of discovery! Poor baby! to all *human* appearance, you came in the worst possible time. Little Miriam assisted her mother in caring for him all she could, and was a great comfort to her. Three months they kept him in the house—months of terror and alarm

--months of joy unspeakable. At this time it became impossible to hide him any longer in this densely-populated country, where every cry would perhaps be heard by the enemy, who was skulking around all the time.

After planning, thinking, and praying, night after night, she at last determined on throwing him on God. Ah! how God loves to be tested! How closely linked with a blessing is every prayer! Jochebed went to the river, attended by her daughter, and brought back a bucket of slime and an armful of bulrushes. Then, in the dead hours of the night, she and her little Miriam wove a basket, and daubed it with the slime, or pitch, so as to make it water-proof. Thank you, good woman, for doing your work so well; you were working on *my destiny*, and the destinies of the souls that God has given me to sparkle in my eternal crown.

Slowly and sadly, with little Moses in her arms, followed by Miriam bearing the basket, by the early morning light, she cautiously and silently crept to the river Nile; then, with no eye to witness save Miriam's and the holy angels, she gently laid him on the waves, and tied the basket to the shore. Then, turning to her daughter, she earnestly charged her to go a short distance, within sight and hearing, and watch him. What a trying position for a little girl of twelve years! Think of it,

you little ones who have sat all your lives in the downy lap of luxury. Here was a child sitting by a river's brink watching the frailest boat that ever floated on a wave; and it contained the most precious passenger, only three months old. This little green ark holds the destinies of the world. Within this basket is inclosed the whole Levitical law, with all its grand and imposing ceremonies. Here are the rules by which all the world is to be governed—yea, the Saviour himself is to be guided by them. Here is the germ of the temple, the grandest building ever fashioned by man's hands. Indeed, it seems that the whole world is now embodied in the form of helpless infancy; for, had he been lost, where, O where should we have been, with our tendencies to wander away from God?

All this glorious destiny is now held by the hand of a little girl twelve years of age. What if she prove faithless? Suppose she gets tired, and runs away? What if she tries to change the arrangement of the little basket? O there are ten thousand dangers to be feared! Reared, as she had been, within sight of the cruel lash, she is equal to the occasion. The hours passed by O so wearily! Higher and higher climbed the Egyptian sun—hotter and hotter it shone; still no one came.

Patiently the little girl sat there, watching, fearing, praying, so tired. The anxious vigil must have

lasted four or five hours. The baby still slept, rocked by the waves, fanned by the breezes, and enveloped in an atmosphere of prayer. What a responsibility for so small a child! No storm came to dash the little vessel in pieces, and drown the child. No venomous reptile disturbed his sleep. Sweetly he slumbered on, as if in his mother's arms.

Suddenly Miriam heard the sound of approaching voices. Her quick ear told her they were the voices of women. Among them was one with queenly form and graceful movements, with long, flowing hair, and loving countenance. Miriam knew that it was the king's daughter. Quietly she sat and listened. How her heart beat! What must she do? O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, protect the baby! prayed the sister.

The princess saw something in the river, and directed her maid to bring it to her. She did so, and, to her surprise and joy, as she opened the little bundle, the most beautiful infant that ever lived looked up in her face and wept. How eagerly she watched the lady as she tenderly took the child from the basket! Never was a woman so closely watched as the princess was by Miriam.

Now the little girl comes from her hiding-place, and, in the most polite but indifferent manner, proposes to call a nurse from among the Hebrew

women. The princess, equally indifferent, agreed to the proposal. So, overcome with joy, she ran to her mother, and brought her to the princess. Miriam acted her part admirably. Had she ran away to play, or fallen asleep, what a different state of affairs there would have been! Your destiny and mine would have been changed. Had she shown too much interest in the child, all would have been spoiled; but she was a good girl, prayed to the God of Abraham, then let him direct the path while she walked in it. She was faithful and true in a *little thing*. There is no special credit in watching a sleeping baby, but to do it right was the thing. Little girls, I do n't know but that one of you may be holding to-day the destiny of a nation.

Jochebed took the child home calmly, as she would any other baby, and he grew from infancy to boyhood beside the faithful little sister who loved him so well.

Miriam, living as she did in the very center of the first nation on earth, had ample means for an education, and, with her quick mind, she grew to be an educated, refined woman. Her talent, or gift (whatever it was called), for prophecy was cultivated. She learned music at an early age, also dancing. In those days dancing was a sacred observance, and as such recognized by the people. A sacred thing changed to common uses is sacri

lege—one of the worst of sins. In this truly admirable character there was a shade of jealousy, which sometimes came out at unexpected times and places. Miriam lived to a good old age, and died at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Sin. She is the first leper on record.

Little girls, learn from Miriam the value of watchfulness. Be faithful to every thing intrusted to your care. Be earnest girls, and you will find no difficulty in being earnest women. You have only one little, short life to live. O live it well, for Christ's sake! I say Miriam learned to dance; I also set her up as an example for the little girls I have taught. I would not, my dear children, have you believe that I approve of dancing as it now is; but if, like Miriam, you dance for Christ's sake, *as a mode of worship*, do it always. If you can get on your knees and ask God to smile on and bless you in *any thing*, it is right—do it. A thing that you cannot ask God to bless you in is a moral, soul-destroying wrong; therefore shun it with more care than you do the miasma of the epidemic. Better die ten thousand deaths than cause one frown to pass over the face of a loving Father in heaven.

M O S E S .

“Despise not the day of small things.”

DURING a time of great persecution among the Israelites in Egypt, there lived a man of the tribe of Levi named Amram, and his wife Jochebed. They had two children—a little girl, aged twelve, named Miriam, and a boy of three, named Aaron. Jochebed was a good wife and exemplary mother, and faithful to her God.

The Hebrews were God’s chosen people; therefore, according to the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they increased so rapidly, in spite of hard work and persecution, that the wicked King Pharaoh issued orders to have all the male children among them slain as soon as they were born, for fear that, in time of war, they would fight him, and become his masters, instead of his slaves.

About the time this slaughter of the innocents was at its height, God sent Jochebed a beautiful, blue-eyed boy. She received him with joy and thanksgiving as a direct gift from God—an immortal soul to train for eternity; therefore she rejoiced. She received him with fear and sorrow, because,

with every cry, he was in danger of having his life taken, thereby tearing up every fiber of her faithful heart. O how anxiously that fond mother watched over her child! How Miriam exerted herself to keep little Aaron, still a baby, from waking him while sleeping! I dare say Amram had to walk on tiptoe—perhaps was scarcely allowed to stay at home—for fear of making baby cry.

When the little one was eight days old, a party of Israelites assembled at the humble dwelling of these pious Levites. Perhaps they had completed a day of hard work, and came, weary and disconsolate, in soiled clothing, with hair and beard uncombed, faces unwashed, to perform what seemed to them almost a meaningless ceremony. But the God of Abraham had commanded it, and he must be obeyed in sorrow and humiliation as well as in the days of joy and prosperity. There certainly is a good time coming, thought they. The “proper child,” as a descendant of Abraham, was circumcised and named. Amram, feeling a kind of presentiment that the “goodly child” was to have some remarkable destiny, and possibly be the expected deliverer of his people from bondage, called him Joachim.

How strangely quiet the place must have been for three long months! Then it became impossible

to hide him any longer, as *boy-babies must cry*; so some new plan to save his life must be discovered. He could not remain in the house—to be sent to a friend's was just as bad. Of course there was no Egyptian woman to take him. What must be done? I can, by faith, hear the low whispers of Amram and Jochebed, as they talk of their various plans while the children are sleeping. But mother-wit is the wisest of all wisdom. The Holy Spirit taught Jochebed what to do. So she went to the river, and returned with an armful of bulrushes—a kind of green reed, or grass, about ten or twelve feet high, common in that country—and a bucketful of slime, or pitch; and at night, with no one to sympathize save the womanly Miriam, Jochebed, probably singing baby to sleep, with her heart full of fear, tremblingly wove a little basket, working in with every reed a prayer and a tear. This was to be his last night in her house. God alone knew where he would sleep the next night. Anxiety banished sleep from her eyes, and she tenderly watched his slumbers all the dreary night.

Early in the morning, while the dew was still sparkling on the blossoms, before the sun began to crimson the eastern horizon, she took the still-sleeping infant, and, with little Miriam to carry the bulrush-basket, went quietly to the river Nile. On arriving there, she silently knelt, and, with the

faith of a Syrophenician mother, lovingly and tenderly placed the little one in the basket, tucking the covering in here and there, then gently put the basket in the river, and tied it to the trees on the shore. Imprinting a last earnest kiss on his pearly brow—perhaps leaving a tear—she left him, still sleeping, alone with God. Then, turning to the little sister, she charged her to go to a distance, and “to wit what would be done to him.”

Homeless within sight of his mother’s house—an orphan with father and mother still living—alone, with his sister, with every nerve intensified as never before, watching him. O mothers, if you want your children well cared for, *throw them on God!*

Arriving at home, Jochebed threw herself on her knees in an agony of prayer. “O my God! the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! my Father, save my boy, if it be thy will, for the sake of the coming Messiah, who, in the fullness of time, is to pour out his blood for him. Let no fish from below, no bird from above, disturb the quiet slumbers of my boy. May my little girl see with a clearer vision, and hear better than ever before, that she may realize the slightest approach of danger. Strengthen the cords that bind the little ark to the trees on the shore. Protect him from all dangers, seen and unseen, and open the way for

me to bring him up for thy glory—for the sake of the Shiloh to come, and be crucified for him.”

How beautifully, how touchingly, the Bible records this story! We get *baby Moses* in our hearts, and *baby Moses* he is, even to the end of his well-spent life. We cannot drive out the baby, even to make room for the great law-receiver on Sinai, nor the perfected saint on Nebo, nor the redeemed spirit on Hermon, as he converses with Jesus and Elias of “that which should be accomplished at Jerusalem.”

We, as Americans, teach our children—and very properly too—to admire and reverence the mother of Washington; but here we have the mother of a man beside whom our Washington sinks into insignificance—a woman whose faith could remove mountains—yea, stronger, for it outwitted the watchful, wicked minions of the despicable King Pharaoh.

Truly there is an omnipotency in mother-love. She may forget her nursing child, but, of all the millions who have existed, those forgetful of their offspring may be numbered by tens or twenties. Then honor your mothers, according to the command, and consider them God’s choicest gifts, next to Jesus.

Closely rolled within the acorn we have the mighty forest. In this bulrush-basket lies the lit-

tle dimpled hand that is one day to hold a rod that will make all Egypt quake and tremble. That little hand is to make millions mourn, and unnumbered millions yet unborn rejoice. That little tongue, now so silent and incapable of articulate sounds, is one day to talk face to face with the great Jehovah. That baby form, lying there in the power of the smallest insect, *apparently*, is to hide in the cleft rock to keep from being annihilated by the glory of God. This little baby is to be singled out by God, and, in manhood, is the only one in all the world who, before death, wore his resurrection-body. That little face is to shine with such dazzling brightness, and catch so much of the heavenly glory, that the people shall beg to have it veiled. Those little feet are to march at the head of a conquering army, six hundred thousand strong, over Africa's burning sands; walk dry-shod through the Red Sea, as at the command of God he waves the rod, and the waters rise on each side—a solid wall of crystal, casting rainbows of beauty in every direction.

With such a destiny before him, such a mother to pray for him, such a God above, no wonder the Lord looked down and smiled—no wonder arch-angels, seraphim, cherubim, and redeemed saints smiled in return. All heaven rejoiced, not at the baby (anybody's child can sleep in a basket in a

river), but at the mother's faith. That was the substantial base on which every thing rested.

As we read the story, we find ourselves naturally looking for something to happen. We cast our eyes around at the river: that mysterious stream, without a source, so far as we can discover, flows on as tranquilly as though it were never to be turned into blood at the command of the infant now lying helpless on its quiet bosom. We look toward Jochebed's dwelling—all is peaceful there. Apparently there are no agonizing hearts under that humble roof. Suddenly we hear a crushing sound among the bulrushes on the bank, and the most natural thing happens—the very thing we were *unconsciously expecting*—Pharaoh's daughter and her maids come to bathe. We are not one bit surprised; neither are we surprised when she takes the little one in her arms, and we hear his wailing cry for his mother ("the babe wept"). That little cry was heard in heaven—it went down in the woman's heart, stirring every tender and true emotion of her soul—truly a Holy Ghost cry. As she saw the crystal drops of infantile fear and loneliness on his little cheek, like new-born dew-drops trembling on a rose-bud, her heart was touched. O what a world of unuttered eloquence in those tears! "He was a goodly child." Every inch of that form, from the top of his bald head to the wee, wee nails

of his little pink toes and fingers, was molded according to the most perfect model of infantine perfection. God had breathed into that baby form his highest ideal of perfect innocence. The kingdom of heaven is peopled with such children. This child's tears made his fortune. Unconsciously he wraps himself right around the *woman's heart*. What cares she at this moment for crowns and scepters? Was there ever a woman whose sympathies were not aroused at the cry of helpless infancy? Yea, a queen on her throne would forget her crown and scepter at the cry of her infant, if she be a true woman.

In this instance the Egyptian princess proves herself worthy to wear the holy name of woman. As she stands by the river, so beautiful—as we see her chucking the baby's chin, kissing the velvety cheek, counting toes and fingers, trying to call up a smile on the face of the weeping babe—while the maidens are standing watching their mistress—we feel that the picture is perfect. Not so—another element is lacking. Holding the little one in her arms, and hushing his cries as best she could, she said to her companions, “Here is one of the Hebrews' children.” How beautiful the faith of those miserable slaves in their God! My father doomed this little one to death, and his mother has chosen this original plan in order to save his life. Ah,

beautiful princess! thou little knowest to what thy warm, loving sympathies will lead thee. Of course the woman who put this little one here expects some one to take care of it for her. I will take him for my own, and call him Moses, "because I drew him out of the water." Dear little Moses, drawn out of ten thousand dangers by the fair, jeweled hand of the princess, you will yet live to draw your people out of their miseries, and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

At this auspicious moment the quick-witted little Miriam came, and said, Let me call one of the Hebrew women to nurse him for you. How indifferently she spoke! That is what I call a *master-stroke* of policy, worthy of a woman. Yes, go, said the princess. How her little heart throbbed for joy as she ran to her mother! O mother, mother! the princess has found our baby—is kissing and playing with him—and she has sent me to call a nurse, and I have come for you. O mother, come on! How happy I am! No longer the proper Miss Miriam, suggesting so indifferently a nurse, but the daughter and sister, rejoicing under a great trial successfully passed—the shadow of a bloody death passing over, and nothing left but joy—and her few words had their little influence in bringing it about.

She had no feeling of envy or jealousy as she thought of her beautiful brother being in the palace day after day, and of his having all the luxuries and refinements of Egyptian life, while Aaron must, as soon as old enough, toil on and on, daily making the tale of the bricks, with or without straw. Another drop in her cup of joy was, that mother could instill into his young heart her own precious faith, and she too could tell him stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then too they could teach the little prince of the great Saviour to come. Ah! might *he* not be the great deliverer himself—the promised one?

No doubt one could have heard the beatings of Jochebed's heart as it thumped violently against her coarse clothing. But down, happiness! She must appear unconcerned. The princess said, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Glorious privilege!—nurse her own son, and then receive wages for it! Surely Jochebed felt that her faith in God was richly rewarded. It did not take many words to complete this transaction. Jochebed took the child, and did not quarrel about the price she was to receive for her love-task.

Carrying the little boy home, Jochebed again knelt, and said, O God of my fathers, faith has triumphed! I thank thee. Take him, and make

him all thine own. Use him for thy glory, and to my fathers' God be all the praise.

Dear Jochebed, we hope that thou didst live to see the thunderings and lightnings from Sinai's rugged brow—that thou didst eat quails and manna in the wilderness. And we hope that thou didst not—no, we will not believe that thou didst—countenance Aaron's idolatry; but while he, with his wicked followers, were dancing around the golden calf, thy prayers were mingling and ascending with those of Moses to the great white throne whereon sitteth a covenant-keeping God.

Jochebed carried Moses, at an early age, to the princess to be educated. Accordingly he was placed at school, under the best masters, where he learned letter-writing, grammar, spelling, composition, making verses, and astronomy, logic, and perhaps astrology and the mathematics. In his education he was thorough. The Pentateuch is to-day, in this boasted age of learning, one of the finest books on earth, aside from its divine character. Moses's habits were good; "he sowed no wild oats," drank no whisky, played no eucher, and, I make bold to assert, *used no tobacco*. These are the fashionable vices of the present day. Of course, people in that age of the world did not have them; but fast young men had their bad habits, perhaps worse than those of our day. Had Moses been a lazy boy or

man, or had he been vicious, "his eye would have been dimmed, and his natural force abated." He could not possibly have accomplished his grand life-work. Bad habits, wicked tempers, extravagance, violating known laws—morally, physically, and mentally—make us old. We *worry* ourselves into ill-health and old age over the inevitable.

The character of Moses is one of the grandest that ever illuminated the pages of history. He stands preëminent in justice, wisdom, modesty, patience—in fact, he had all the elements of a perfect manly character. When, in early life, with a crown sparkling above his head, the heir to the proudest and most prosperous of earthly thrones, he chose, of his own free will, "to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," therefore forsaking the grandeur of the court of Pharaoh, he returned to his people, choosing poverty and God in preference to riches and idolatry. When did the world ever look on so noble an act? and when was noble act so nobly rewarded?

Moses lives to-day in all the purity of his brave young manhood, and, when time shall be no more, he will still be in the spring-time of life, while the Pharaohs have long since gone to "their own place," and we know nothing of them, only as Moses tells us,

In forsaking the halls of idolatry, and going to the huts of wretchedness, *to please God*, he proves his bravery sufficiently; therefore we will not speak of his defense of his people against the tyranny of their oppressors, but will draw a short moral from his life. Our cherished doctrine of God's providence over little things is beautifully illustrated in every step of the life of this blessed man.

Surely the Spirit of the living God must have dwelt in mighty power in the heart of Jochebed, or she never could have intrusted this precious treasure in so frail a bark on the river, there to be exposed to so many dangers. *It did look like throwing him away.* He was a little baby, but not too small to find a resting-place beneath the omniscient eye of Jehovah. A very slight breeze could have loosed the little bark from its moorings, and sent him down the river to starve, or sink, or be devoured by the venomous reptiles that infest that region. That little breeze did not come; if it did, it simply fanned baby into a more healthful slumber. The sun, pouring down his steel rays, might have stricken the brain, but it did not—it simply warmed and lightened his little home, casting a prettier flush on his face. The great danger, it seems to me, was the crocodiles, so numerous at that time; but they did not touch him.

From this circumstance some Sunday-school

workers have argued that there were no reptiles in the river at that time, or they would have enjoyed the "goodly child" in a manner far different from the princess' enjoyment. God's great scheme was involved, and nothing on earth could touch him. Those wicked persecutors might have taken his life, but the ministering spirits formed themselves, at God's command, into a solid wall around that basket that nothing could overleap. The holy trinity of a mother's faith, love, and prayer, had purified the very atmosphere of the place, so that the sleeping infant was positively death-proof.

When our God protects us, we need not fear. The lions are never in the path of duty, but close beside it. There is nothing in our path but the cross, and, as we take it up in our Master's name, bright rays of sparkling beauty begin to fly out of it, and, ere we are aware, it has changed into the glittering crown of eternal life. Were Satan to come in all his majestic blackness, with forked tail, cloven foot, and tongue of fire, the smallest little one who loves God need not fear, for with one word of five letters (Jesus) he can drive back all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Then, my dear boys, you are not too small for God to see you, no matter if mamma is poor, and papa is a drunkard, and your clothes are torn, and feet bare. You are under the care of the God of little Moses. Then

love him, not as a far-off something, but as an ever-present Saviour, who sees and will punish that little cheating act of yours, who rejoices with you over every trial successfully passed, and who will call you to an account for every sinful thought, word, and act.

Be like Moses—brave, gentle, just, patient—above all, be *faithful* “unto death” to the Jesus who bought you with his own blood. Never fear any thing but sin; and if Satan himself comes to fight you, as he will at every turn in life, buckle on the whole armor of God, and fight him face to face. If he gets you down, get up, and, under the blood-stained banner of King Immanuel, fight him again, and in the end God will receive you to himself, amidst the hallelujahs of all the redeemed of earth, and crown you his forever, and in eternity you will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

N A M E L E S S .

“We know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth.”

“**A**ND Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.”

Poor, tired man! well he needed something strong to lean upon.

Once upon a time there was among the Israelites, of the tribe of Dan, a very strong man named Samson, one of the most romantic characters of the Bible. Did it come within the scope of this volume, many stories of wild adventure might be told about this great man. He was, on some occasions, badly treated by both friends and enemies. He did some great works for God requiring almost superhuman brute force. His purity of character is doubtful; but it requires many kinds of people to make a world, and a Samson in his place is as necessary as a Moses and a Samuel in their places. He was raised up by God to do a certain work, and he accomplished it. His life was a success, as the

apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, mentions his name among other worthies who did wonderful things through faith. He was the last judge of Israel, and judged twenty years—was about forty-one at his death.

On one occasion the Philistines were celebrating a great feast in honor of their god Dagon, who, as they thought, had delivered Samson into their hands some time previous. They had cruelly put out his eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, and compelled him to grind in their prison-house. His hair, which had been sheared through the instrumentality of Delilah, had now grown out, and with it his strength had returned. The lords and nobles of the land, with their wives and daughters, were assembled in the temple. While the merriment was at its height, some one proposed to have poor Samson brought in to make sport for them. So he was led in by a little boy, or, as the Bible says, a lad, and placed in the center of the room, where he made sport for the company. I don't know the nature of these sports, or how a poor, blind man, who had spent some time in hard toil in a prison-house among enemies, could do any thing to amuse so large a crowd of spectators. But he did what was required of him. Finally, becoming fatigued, he asked the little boy to let him feel the pillars of the temple, that he might lean on them. The kind-

hearted boy, willing to accommodate him, and fearing no evil, consented; and Samson, thinking it a good time to be revenged, prayed to the Lord, and said, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

Now, there were about three thousand men and women—no children mentioned, but I suppose there were some, as it is such a pity for so many to go into the presence of God without any to be saved eternally. Then Samson took hold of the two pillars, and leaned with all his might, and down came the building, crushing the last Hebrew judge, three thousand men and women, and the kind-hearted little boy, to death; so that Samson, in his death, so bloody and terrible, slew more of the Lord's enemies than he ever did in his life.

Sometimes a Christian's holy life seems to accomplish little, but in the hour of death God sees fit to do more than in his life. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. Living or dying, let us glorify God.

This is the most meager account of any of the children of the Bible, but I feel unwilling to leave out a single one; therefore I wrote this because Samson's leader was a Bible-child—because he did

a kindness for one of God's afflicted ones. God never forgets or fails to reward the giver of a cup of cold water in his name. No one knows, whether this boy was a relative of Samson or a Philistine—perhaps the latter. He seems to have been kind and accommodating, otherwise he would have refused the simple request of the poor, blind man.

What a contrast between his kindness and the hard-hearted malignity of the haughty lords of the Philistines! He was sorry for the tired man. Ah! little did he know, when he agreed to that seemingly small request, that the black-winged angel of death was in the atmosphere, ready, with one fell swoop, to gather up the whole crowd. How little he dreamed that in a few moments he would lie a mangled mass of flesh, and blood, and bones, so near the man he so generously favored! He little thought his young soul would go up to the God of Samson amid the shrieks of horror—the wails of the dying—but such was the case. I hope he was too young to be lost. I hope the dying moments of the departing Samson were spent in asking a blessing on him. God grant that the persecuted judge and innocent boy together were borne on the broad, white wings of sympathizing angels to the home of the blest!

As death may come to us as suddenly, and in as

unwelcome a form, let us keep ready, for "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." O that we may be always ready! and the only way to prepare for death is to lead a holy life, hid with Christ in God.



SAMUEL.

“Feed my lambs.”

ELKANAH and Hannah had been married several years, but Hannah had no children; so, in spite of the worthy portion of this world's goods given to her by her husband, there was a void in her heart that would not be entirely filled by his love. It cried out in vain for the sound of baby laughter and the noise of merry feet. But there was no baby face to kiss, no little bed to kneel by, and ask God's blessing on the curly heads nestling there. Hannah served God faithfully, and went regularly to the temple once a year to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Once, while there, she prayed for a son, in this manner. “O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.”

Forgetful of self in the earnestness and intensity of her prayer, her anxious heart moved her uncon-

scious lips; and Eli, the priest, seeing this, and knowing not the circumstances, accused her of drunkenness; but she answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." Eli said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him."

In the fullness of time her prayer was answered. God gave her a son, and she called his name Samuel, because she had asked him of the Lord. When the little boy was a few weeks old, Elkanah and his household went up to Shiloh to worship; "but Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide forever." For this noble act of consecration God gave Hannah other sons and daughters, and she was happy in her children, her husband, and her God.

Was there ever any thing more beautiful than this? Not even Abraham's sacrifice, tender and touching as it was, could equal this. In *his* case the suffering would soon have been over, leaving, in the course of time, a *happy sorrow*. In Han-

nah's case the sacrifice was far more difficult to make. How she must have mourned when she thought of her precious boy growing up so near the wicked sons of Eli! Hannah knew that the influence of bad company is the greatest snare that Satan can weave around God's people. But "when thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up."

God sent his angel to guard the little boy, and he grew to be an old man, never having willfully sinned. He had no need of conversion, as he had no sins to be pardoned. He was born, and lived to man's estate, in a state of salvation.

Some will say, then, Why need our children be converted? Yes, why need they? Simply because we, as teachers and parents, by our carelessness, prayerlessness, and fashionableness, allow them to go into actual transgression. Parents can, and *some* do, by simple faith in God, keep their little ones so close to the cross of Christ that from their very birth they have the blood of Calvary continually flowing over their souls; and they grow up, live, and die, without the great agonies of repentance, and they know only the joys of converting grace. It is not necessary for a child to go away into sin. If a thing is very much soiled, it needs a great deal of cleansing. A child's soul cannot possibly be as deeply dyed in sin as a man's, conse-

quently he does not need as much grace. God will not allow his grace to be wasted by us, rich and boundless as it is.

“So the woman [Hannah] abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh; and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he [little Samuel] worshiped the Lord there.” Then Hannah went home, and Samuel “did minister unto the Lord before Eli, the priest.”

I wonder how he worshiped. I wonder if he knelt down, and folded two little dimpled hands, closed two blue eyes, and said, “Now I lay me down to sleep; God bless papa and mamma, and make me a good boy, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

Now, one of you little ones are saying, What a funny mistake in this book! There was no Jesus when Samuel lived—he had not come. That is

right, little boy or girl: investigate matters—study for yourself. The Holy Spirit will enlighten your minds better than friend or minister. But Samuel worshiped the same Jesus in Shiloh that you worship in your homes, only he looked *forward* to his coming—you look backward—the same “Jesus yesterday, to-day, and forever.” The robe of flesh did not change the divinity.

Now Eli’s sons were very wicked, and sinned before God exceedingly. But Samuel grew in favor with God and man. How beautifully those words express the growth of another child who went up to the temple to worship, and, when grown, became the temple’s self, in whom all the world might find a holy of holies—a refuge from every storm!

Samuel grew from infancy to manhood among those dark-souled, bad sons of Eli, without a single willful sin. His mother made him a little coat every year, and brought it to him when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. I do n’t know if this coat was the linen ephod worn by the priests when they ministered in the temple.

How like a golden thread of glittering beauty running through black serge shines the beautiful life of little Samuel! Mothers, have you given your children to God? renounced every claim to them? and do you stand ready to give them back to him at any time? Are you praying and strug-

gling for their souls' salvation? Or are you most interested in how you shall decorate their perishing bodies? Are you striving to polish a living stone, fit to be placed in the wall of the eternal building in heaven?

When Samuel was a little boy, while he ministered in the temple before Eli, ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, Samuel lay down to sleep on his little bed, in the outer court of the temple; and the Lord called Samuel, and he answered him (supposing it to be the priest), and said, Here am I; and he ran to Eli. Eli told him that he had not called. Samuel lay down again, and in the darkness again came the voice, "Samuel." He went to Eli once more, saying, "Here am I; for thou didst call me." The third time he was called he made the same reply; so Eli told him, if the voice came again, to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Samuel did so, and the Lord said to him, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." And then he told Samuel the punishment he intended to let fall upon the people for their idolatry, and that Eli's wicked sons should perish.

The child Samuel grew on, like a beautiful stream of limpid water, as it makes its way out of the rock—first a few drops of crystal coolness, then

it gathers strength, and runs on and on, through meadows, fields, and mountains, never ceasing to run, and sparkle, and reflect the rays of the sun perfectly, adding fertility to the soil, deepening, widening, receiving other streams, until it is a mighty river, filled with fish for the nourishment of man, gives its waters to the sun to cause rain to water the parched earth, eternally giving, eternally progressing, until it reaches the great ocean. This is an exact picture of the life of little Samuel as he began his life in Ramah: then the stream ran for awhile, with its health-giving influences, through the quiet coolness of the temple, then from there out into the nation, then onward until even now we are made better by the life then lived.

After the death of Eli, Samuel, still young, became to the nation what steam is to the steam-boat or locomotive—what the mainspring is to the watch, or blood to the human body—the chief mover, the soul of the nation, the one man on whom hung the well-being of the whole nation. At an early age he was firmly established as judge of the people, and we find him, Jacob-like, wrestling and prevailing with God in prayer, while the Philistines were driven before the people, the towns retaken, and prosperity fell upon the land like the gentle dews of heaven.

“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.” This glowing live coal, laid on the altar by a loving, faithful mother, one who loved God better than all the world, was accepted of God, fanned by the Holy Spirit into a flame, and behold the great fire of holy influence kindled throughout the nation!

Samuel’s God is our God, and if we give ourselves to him in early life, just as we are, he will accept and bless us, and we too may make the world better, and assist in bringing the nations of earth to his feet. God bless every little Samuel who reads these lines, and may they all be consecrated Samuels, living “lives hid with Christ in God!”

DAVID.

“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

DAVID was the second king of Israel. His father's name was Jesse. His first appearance on the page of history occurs when he is quite a large boy. Samuel, the great prophet of Israel, was directed by the Holy Spirit to go to the house of Jesse, and anoint one of his sons—that is, pour the oil of consecration on his head, showing that he was to be king over the people. Jesse was a descendant of the tribe of Judah, and was a shepherd, living with his wife and children in an humble way in the city of Bethlehem, situated about six miles from Jerusalem. Samuel at first refused to go, fearing that Saul, the ruling monarch, would kill him. So the Spirit commanded him to go to Bethlehem, and offer a sacrifice unto God, and invite Jesse and his sons to the feast, after which he was to cause the sons of Jesse to pass before him in succession, beginning with the eldest. It is sometimes necessary to use a little policy in order to save a soul. Consecrated policy is an excellent thing. The Spirit advised Samuel not to look on the countenance or

stature, as God sees the heart, and not with the eyes of man.

Outward adornment is nothing, only as it serves as an index to some virtue within the soul. If a woman wears finery to satisfy a selfish desire, it is sin; if she wears it in order to please the eyes of those who love her, it is a virtue. Good and evil are simple heart-principles, that God sees.

Trusting alone in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Samuel went, carrying with him the horn of anointing, and the heifer for the sacrifice. The elders of the town were alarmed at his coming. It seems, from these words, that the appearance of this holy man was an evil omen. He informed them that his was a peaceable errand.

After sanctifying Jesse and his sons, he invited them to the feast, explained his business more fully, and asked Jesse to cause his sons to pass before him, beginning with the eldest. Eliab slowly passed by. Samuel said in his heart, as he saw his majestic form, and thought of the once handsome Saul, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." The Holy Spirit was silent. Samuel, disappointed, called the next one, Abinadab, then Shammah, then another, and another, till seven of them had passed. Now completely nonplused, he looked up, and said, "Are here all thy children?" Jesse replied, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, be-

hold, he keepeth the sheep"—as much as to say, David is out among the hills, with the flocks and herds. He is a very good sort of boy—mother's darling—but—. Ah! we have all seen many of those boys—positive jewels, rich and rare; but for some cause parents fail to appreciate their value until, too often, the grave has closed over them. There are many Davids to-day, feeding their flocks, and, for the lack of a Samuel, with the consecrating oil of kindly encouragement, they remain in obscurity till Jesus makes up his jewels, when they will shine with unfading luster in the eternal coronet of the King of kings.

Samuel would not partake of the feast till he had obeyed the voice of God, and anointed the new king. So David was sent for. He came, overcome with surprise, modesty, and pleasure. He knew of Samuel—no man in the nation was so well known. The beautiful boy came tremblingly toward him. He knew that the prophet never made meaningless visits. This was the greatest event of David's hitherto quiet life. As the bright, rosy-cheeked boy came, so young and innocent—for his mode of life was freer from vice than that of others—the Spirit quickly whispered, "Arise, anoint him." With the morning-dew still glittering on his golden curls, and the odor of wild flowers clinging to his garments, his heart more on the little

lambs he had left than on the present ceremonies, he stands before the prophet, the very incarnation of youthful health, beauty, and virtue. I wonder if Samuel thought of his own young days—how he was once a *baby-priest*—as now he anoints a boy-king. Does he look down the stream of time, with prophetic eye, and see another Anointed One, with the Holy Ghost like a dove descending on him?

I wish I were an artist long enough to paint this scene. I wish I could, with this pen and ink, draw it upon the mind's picture-gallery of every child who reads this, with all the bright, glowing coloring with which I see it. I see the smile of contempt that wreathes the otherwise beautiful mouth of the handsome Eliab, and I see the answering smile on the lips of the brothers. The old gentleman looks—well, I suppose, quizzical. He wonders why *the boy* should be the chosen one, and he is proud of the distinction conferred on the family. His face wears an undecided expression. All watch with intense interest the oil of consecration falling so gently on the soft, curling hair of the modest David. Then "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."*

*Right here I expect the most cutting criticism. Every little Johnnie, and Jimmie, and Willie, that I ever taught, will pass his puny sentence on these words. He will say David was a great sinner, and did thus and so. As Sun-

As soon as these ceremonies were over, he returned to his flocks, taking no less, or better, care of them than ever, not one bit spoiled by the high honor conferred on him. Thus it ever is with really great minds. Pride and vanity find no place in *consecrated hearts*. No earthly distinction can elevate a heaven-born soul. David remained feeding his sheep by the still waters and in green pastures, until called from his obscurity by the miserable, God-forsaken, old king, to play on his harp to charm away the evil spirit that tormented him. Subsequently he became armor-bearer to the king. One of Saul's servants describes David as follows: "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethle-

day-school workers, many feel called of God (?) in this age of investigation to the work of digging from his grave, with sacrilegious hand, the old "man after God's own heart," laying bare his most secret sins, and then coolly judge him by our law, the Gospel of Christ. We forget the age in which he lived; that he had no Star in the east to illumine his pathway, no Baby Jesus to love, no Boy in the temple about the Father's business—the salvation of souls—no descending Dove, no pentecostal tongues of fire, no New Testament miracles, no resurrection and ascension. Shame on those teachers who, forgetful of David's ten thousand virtues, deal so harshly with his few sins, while morality was yet in its infancy! Their pupils may be guilty of worse sins than David's, for they sometimes deny the whole plan of salvation, or fail to avail themselves of it.

hemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and the Lord is with him." What a recommendation! Is there any thing more he could have said? Good blood, musical talent, brave, prudent, beautiful, persevering, and under the direct control of God. Like Enoch's biography, it is absolutely perfect. To add one word more would be "to paint the lily, or throw a perfume on the violet." It may be that none of us will ever rise to his standard of excellence; but all can, and *must*, possess his chief virtue—"and the Lord is with him."

While David was feeding his sheep beside the still waters and in green pastures, near the city of Bethlehem, after his private anointing, the Israelites, with Saul at their head, were fighting the Philistines. Goliath was a huge giant, as high as some of our houses, perhaps—"six cubits and a span"—and large in proportion. "The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam," and he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and was armed with a coat of mail. Thick plates of brass covered his tremendous limbs. As he stood incased from head to foot in a metal hard enough to turn or break the spears that struck it, he roared defiance against the hosts of Israel. The soldiers fled in terror at the sight. No wonder! A mighty image of brass in front of

them, and no living God, no loving Father, behind them. The army was now covered with the black drapery of despair.

David, who had been sent to the camp by his father, with food for his three brothers, then in the army of Saul, was filled with indignation on hearing the vaunting defiance of the gigantic Philistine. He offered his services to the king, only to be ridiculed by his own brothers. Truly, "a prophet hath no honor in his own country." "Pshaw! nonsense!" said Saul. "You are a boy. Very well for you to feed sheep, and play on a harp! The very idea of you fighting a giant is absurd. Go back to your sheep, my boy." We reason just this way now, often denying the possibility of a child leading a soul to Jesus. David replied, blushing and trembling as he spoke: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him. . . . Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." David would have made a good lawyer, as well as prophet and king. Saul, in despair, feeling that all was lost in any event, consented to let him fight; so he sent for his armor. David tried it on, and finding it so large and heavy, he pulled it off, and put on instead

the whole armor of God. That armor, forged by Jesus himself on the anvils of heaven, fitted him.

What a strange armor that is, which fits all kinds of people, and never wears out, or needs mending! The boy David wore it; the king David, in the height of his power, wore it. Paul, baby Samuel, lovely Ruth, gentle Esther, and little Abijah, wore it right into heaven, though the latter was related to "Nebat's son, who caused the land to sin." The great and the good of all nations, races, and conditions of life, have fought with it on, and never in all the world's history has one been conquered. David was clad with the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, his loins girt about with truth, the shield of faith, and his feet were shod with a preparation of the gospel of peace.

Thus equipped, fully armed except the back—no armor has ever been forged for the Christian's back—he started off, with his shepherd's staff and sling. Crossing a brook, he stopped and picked up five small, smooth stones, and went forward to meet the enemy that had been the terror of all Israel for so many years. Goliath was very indignant at the king for sending *a boy* to fight him. David walked on, seemingly careless of the fierce words that were falling from the haughty lips of the king of Gath. He was not one bit afraid.

He felt the everlasting arms of Omnipotence around him. God's people press up to him, and are always brave in times of real danger. Only those whose knees have bowed to Baal, who stoop to drink at the muddy waters of earthly pleasures when the war-cry is heard, prove to be cowards in danger. David knew, as we all do, that the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.

Tremblingly we await the result of this seemingly unequal contest, as the fearless boy advances nearer and nearer the terror of his nation and the insulter of his God. Coming within the proper distance, David put one of the stones in his sling, and with that arm of weakness cast it at Goliath's head. Whizz! went that little pebble through the air, carrying death and eternal torment with it, as, directed by the Spirit of God, it struck the giant on the forehead, killing him dead, *because he defied the armies of the living God!* Boys, do you belong to that army? Then, be valiant soldiers, and God will take care of you. David then ran forward, and, with Goliath's own sword, cut off his head, and carried it to the king.

A mere boy, this time, was Israel's deliverer. While conversing with Saul, with the great head of Goliath, dripping with blood, in his hand, Jonathan, the valiant son of Saul, sitting near, "it came

to pass that when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Love at first-sight, truly! Who that reads this charming history can say there is no such thing as love at first-sight? and, as we read on, we find that friendship is as enduring as the soul itself, when founded on principle. This is an account of the most beautiful friendship on record.

The poor, persecuted, shepherd-boy, with God's private trade-mark on his forehead, running for his life, and the brave, successful young warrior, son of a king, who knows, and sheds secret tears at, his coming dethronement by the shepherd-boy friend, is a fine subject for a poem. If every Goliath among us could meet his David, what a good time we would have! Blasphemy, profanity, irreverence, extravagance, intemperance, and infidelity, are among the growing evils of the day. A brave boy, who loves his mother and his God, will never, under any circumstances, poison the atmosphere, stain his soul, or insult his fellow-man, by using an oath. Is there not some David dreaming his life away amid the violets, who will invent some way of ridding the world of these Goliaths, who are defying the armies of the living God?

If one boy is made to stop, think, and forever forsake sin, then this little book has not been writ-

ten in vain. David's weakness was his strength. By taking the smooth, round stones of prayer, patience, perseverance, faith, and love, we can fight successfully against the giant sin in all his Protean forms. We cannot enter the secret chambers of the mind of God, and see why the child David, fresh from the sheep-fold, was chosen, appointed, and anointed, in the court of heaven, to succeed the brilliant, misguided Saul. Free grace alone chose him, not for what he *had* done, but for the mighty possibilities lying folded from the eye of man under the modest garb of the unassuming young shepherd-boy. (For a full history of **this** noble youth, see 1 Sam. xvi.)

AN OBEDIENT BOY.

“Obedience is better than sacrifice.”

DAVID, the son of Jesse, who had been secretly anointed king by the Prophet Samuel, was chosen by Saul to play on his harp, to charm away the evil spirit that tormented him. Saul, who was jealous of David, soon began to treat him at one time with kindness, then again with great cruelty, often trying to take his life, while professing the greatest love for him. Once David unconsciously offended his master, and had to run for life. Fortunately he had a sincere friend at court to plead his cause, and through his influence the life of David was often saved. A friend at court! Ah! the Christian has a friend at the court of infinite justice—an “advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

This time David discovered that he had offended his royal master before Jonathan did, and, in a private interview, informed him of the fact. Jonathan, through filial love, denied it, but David insisted. He said, “As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and

death." David then requested Jonathan to watch his father carefully, and if he noticed "the vacant chair," and made inquiries about it, to say that he asked permission of him to go home to keep a feast at the request of his brother—if evil was intended, to let him know. Jonathan said he would go out in the field with his bow and arrows, and pretend to shoot at a mark. He would take a little boy with him to pick up his arrows, and, said he, if I say to the lad, "The arrows are on this side of thee," then all is well—my father is not angry; but if I say, "The arrows are beyond thee," then you will know that evil is intended; but remember, by the sacredness of our love, when your enemies are cut off, or turned into friends, and I, it may be, am numbered with Israel's dead, O forget not to show kindness to my loved ones! David again repeated the promise, which he so faithfully kept in after-years, when, on the topmost wave of prosperity, he sought out and provided for the poor, afflicted Mephibosheth, the only son of his true friend Jonathan.

The next day Saul missed David, but said nothing, and again the next; on the third he made inquiries. Jonathan repeated what David said concerning the feast, and had a javelin thrown at him for his fidelity. In the evening, according to agreement, Jonathan took his bows and arrows, and,

attended by a little boy, went out in the field back of the city, and began shooting by way of practice, *apparently*. O that we had as good a cause for our *apparentlies*! The little boy looked on without comment, watching the arrows in their flight, and enjoying the pure, fresh air, perhaps glad to get away from some simple home-duty that his mother required of him.

David had concealed himself near the stone Ezel. Jonathan shot several times, then, seeming to be weary, he cried out in a loud voice to the little lad, "Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed, haste, stay not." The child, perhaps astonished at the urgent command, obeyed immediately, and, hunting in the grass, he soon found the arrows, and brought them to his master. Jonathan then sent him home with his artillery, or bows and arrows, all unconscious that partly through his tiny influence the life of the greatest man of the nation had been saved, and the gracious designs of God partly accomplished. Jonathan might have hunted his own arrows, and still God's purposes *might* have remained unchanged. I am glad he did not, as I should have been deprived the pleasure of writing this chapter, and you, dear children, the profit (?) of reading it.

After the boy's departure, poor David came from his hiding-place. Then followed one of those

painfully delightful interviews between the young prince and his humble friend which make the life of both so rich and beautiful. Cancel Jonathan's from David's life, and, alas! we have no King David, for that life was saved several times by Jonathan. Take David out of Jonathan's life, and its chief beauty is gone.

Children, I may be low and groveling in my tastes, calling on my little girl-readers to follow the example of Naaman's little servant-girl, and now on my boys to learn a lesson of obedience from Jonathan's servant, instead of pointing to some illustrious prince. But we cannot learn the greatest lesson of life (obedience) too well, and for us the smallest, most insignificant things are important. Every falling leaf, every glittering dew-drop, has a lesson of decay and brightness for us. The simple falling of an apple from a tree was a subject grand enough to engage the mind of one of earth's mightiest. The child-like giant, Sir Isaac Newton, the great high-priest of nature, did not disdain to spend weeks, perhaps years, over a falling apple.

Can we not learn something of the value of prompt, cheerful obedience? This child performed his mission well. He asked no questions—did not walk around gazing vacantly on the surrounding scenery. He did not run away to chuck a bird, or

catch a butterfly, as some of you would have done. He did not ask questions at the rate of forty per minute, as some little girls I know would have asked them. No; he watched the arrows as they cut their way through the thin air in their rapid flight, and saw where they fell, and, at a word from Jonathan, like one of those arrows, he flew straight forward, and found them. He literally obeyed the command, "Haste, stay not." Having found them all, he returned to his master, who commanded him to take them home. He did so immediately, not waiting to see if any one was coming, or if Jonathan had any thing more to say. He understood his business—attended to it, then went home. He was an obedient, nice little boy. What a China missionary he would have made, had he lived in our country! When he heard, in his inner consciousness, the still small voice of God, saying, Go preach my gospel, how he would have "made speed, hasted, stayed not!" When he heard God saying "Arise, shine," how he would have trimmed his taper, and *shone* on the dark fields of heathen lands! Harvest-time over, how promptly he would have brought in his sheaves, even precious souls won for Christ! What a light shining in darkness he would have been! He richly deserves this passing notice, the only one I ever saw of him. I only wish his name had not been lost in the deep waters of oblivion.

If he was not an actual link in the chain of fortunes, or misfortunes, rather, of King David, he was *the shine*, the glitter, on those links, making the history of that wonderful man more wonderful. Curiosity, laziness, or tattle, would have brought destruction on the young shepherd-king, in spite of all Jonathan's precautions. God, however, had wisely directed Jonathan in the choice of the boy. This child, in his humility and ignorance, reminds me of another child, who assisted Jesus to perform a miracle by the loan of a basket of fishes. One, perhaps, saved the lives of a hungry multitude; the other saved the life of David, through whom that Jesus was to descend and feed that multitude. Both of these boys are without a name in the Bible.

We can either coöperate with God, and increase his glory, and add to our eternal happiness by doing his will, or we can cross his purposes, and mar his projects so far, but the grand object shall be fulfilled. O that we may ever glorify him on earth, by hasting to do his holy will!

ONLY A BABY.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."
2 Sam. xii. 23.

WAS it saved in heaven? Did the atonement cover its case? Most assuredly, for "of such is the kingdom of heaven." A tiny, little boy, too young to have his name recorded in history, or carved on monumental marble—yea, too young to belong to the synagogue—only seven days of anguish and suffering! On the eighth day, the ministering angel who had presided at his birth, and hovered unseen in mid-air around the couch of the little sufferer, received from God the welcome words, "It is enough." Then, gently disengaging the little spirit from its clay prison-house, and inclosing it in her loving arms, she spread her angelic pinions, and was soon far away beyond the murky regions of sorrow, in the pure atmosphere, breathed only by God, his holy angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect."

This child was the oldest son of David, king of Israel, and the beautiful Bath-sheba, *ex-wife* of Uriah. David *knew* that he would die when quite

young. Nathan, the prophet, and adopted brother of the king, had gone to him a short time before its birth with a singular reproof, contained in a beautiful parable, in which he makes David unconsciously pass sentence on himself. The story is something like this: There was once a rich man, who had all that heart could desire. He had a friend who was very poor, possessing nothing on earth to love but one little ewe lamb. He fed and petted it, and at night it slept in his bosom. O how tenderly he loved it! By and by the rich man laid his covetous eyes on his poor friend's only possession, and made up his mind that he would have it. Finding no honorable way, he resorted to stratagem and meanness, and finally succeeded. Now, said Nathan, the rich man possesses the ewe lamb.

David's indignation rose higher and higher as he heard the disgraceful story, and he began to swear, by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the man who dared do so vile a thing in his kingdom should die. Nathan, looking him calmly in the face, said, "Thou art the man." Your sin was a private, personal matter, but it was sin, and as such it poisoned the moral atmosphere that surrounded your kingdom, and every soul is more or less a sufferer from the moral miasma of your act. Your punishment shall be before the eyes of all

Israel. Sorrow and suffering shall be your portion as long as you live.

Boys, beware of even *one* sin; a very small one (?) will sometimes darken a whole life-time, blighting every bud of hope as it spreads its opening petals in the heart.

As you killed Uriah with a sword, that instrument of death shall never depart from your house. Your children and grandchildren shall be sources of sorrow to you. You may live, though you deserve death, but the child shall die.

Why put that little thing in a book? What did he ever do, except cry? Because that child, measuring its life by seven risings of the sun, exerted an influence over the affairs of men that no other human being ever did, except Jesus. Had he never seen the light, the most beautiful portion of the Psalms would never have been written. Millions now praising God in heaven would have gone down to the regions of endless woe but for these magnificent photographed pulsations of the heart of David. He had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation for the sake of this child; now its death brought him, a penitent, to the feet of Infinite Mercy. Now, having sinned and suffered so deeply, he knew how to feel for the tried and afflicted. Had any man committed this or that sin, and come to David for sympathy or pardon, he had

only to reflect: I too have been guilty of a similar offense, therefore I must forgive.

This little infant of days was a rod in the hands of God to chastise and bring David to his knees. God often deals thus with his children, taking away our clay idols, and striking us to the heart with them. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is as positive and imperative now, since Jesus wore the robe of humanity, as it was when given amid the thunders of Sinai. This little creature accomplished his mission, and died. Death, with his icy fingers, set his seal upon him, and he became an infant forever. To David and Bath-sheba this child always remained an infant. Solomon alone grew to manhood. The revolving years brought no change in this one to their hearts.

Progression, the great law of nature, is equally a law of grace. Our material bodies grow mature, then fade. Our minds and souls are always on the wing, and, but for the flesh, would never weary. As this child was the embodiment of all the evils in man's nature, what a mercy that God took him! What a fearful record of crime and misery would have been his portion, had he lived! Then he would have been lost at last.

During the seven days' illness of the little one, David was so distressed that he sat, day and night, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, mourning and pray-

ing God to spare his life. "I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. In thee, O God, do I put my trust. Thou wilt hear, O Lord, my God; for I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. Make haste to help me, O God of my salvation." Thus spoke the sorely-tried heart of Israel's monarch.

When the little one died, David's servants, seeing his grief, were afraid to tell him. He, knowing the fact by their expression of countenance, asked them about it. They told him the truth, and he arose, bathed, dressed himself neatly, came out smiling, and offered a sacrifice to God. Magnificent David! truly thou art "a man after God's own heart." The servants were surprised, and asked why he was so cheerful; as his child was dead, he would never see him more. Then and there fell from David's lips this grand, life-giving principle of the Christian religion—the balm for all the woes of life: My baby is dead; I shall not see him here any more; *he cannot return to me, but, thank God, I shall go to him.*

Blessed resurrection! David saw it dimly in the swelling buds and opening blossoms of spring, the rising sun, the falling and evaporation of the glittering dew-drops. He knew it too by a direct revelation from Heaven. In all nature he saw the growing of life out of death. If a grain of corn

is planted, and dies, it springs up into a beautiful stalk, and yields thirty, forty, or fifty grains. Jesus died, and out of that precious death *all may live*, eternally.

David felt in his heart, by a direct inspiration from God, that there is a day coming when we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. No wonder he cried out, in joyful anticipation, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! I will sing praises to the God of my salvation!" Out of the greatest sorrows of his life came forth, by the resurrection-power of God, the grandest joys. So with us—out of the black subsoil of our hearts' sorest griefs, having been plowed by the plowshare of suffering, arise and bloom the most beautiful flowers and luscious fruits of joy and blessedness. The heaviest crosses we carry on our hearts will be wreathed with the most fragrant flowers of faith, hope, and love, whose perfume will be cast the whole length of our pathway to the tomb—yea, through the gates of death.

Bath-sheba's child did more for the purifying of David's heart than Absalom or Solomon ever did. Boys, if you are tempted, cling to Jesus. Praise God anyhow, and the deeper the waters of sorrow and woe, the more firmly will your feet rest on the Rock of Ages on the eternity side of the river of death.

A BABY'S NARROW ESCAPE.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

MILLIONS of insects, no bigger than a mite, are born, live one day, their little spirits go out in space, and the sun casts his departing rays on their tiny corpses, whitening and hardening them, ready to go into a new formation. That formation, after ages have passed, becomes a continent, or island, fitted for the habitation of man. Why these minute insects exist so short a time, and where the life goes, is unknown to the most scientific naturalist—these are among the insoluble mysteries of nature.

As the coral insects of a day pile their little dead bodies up until we have a mountain-chain, rearing its snow-clad peaks high above the clouds, so thousands of babies are born, open their wondering eyes to the light of this beautiful world, look into the loving faces of their mothers, and open new fountains of tenderness in their hearts, then quietly close them in death, their little souls gently flitting away to God. Their mission seems to remain unaccom-

plished, but, for aught we know, the moral and spiritual influences of these children of a day, piled up, mountain-high, in the spiritual world, may be a power for good that eternity alone can reveal. As not a corpse of the coral insect is lost to the natural world, so each little soul is still a living power in the world of spirits. These little incarnated sparkles of innocence may stand nearer the throne of God than the highest and brightest archangel there, "for in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Children are often snatched away by death from great, soul-destroying evils. Heaven must be filled, or Jesus will not see "the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Sometimes God sees that the gates of perdition are yawning to receive them, and determines to save, 'like a skillful, kind-hearted surgeon. He sends his minister, "Death, with his sickle keen," and clips the brittle thread of life, and takes them to himself.

Once upon a time, long before there was a Baby Jesus, two wicked women lived in one house in the city of Jerusalem—I never heard their names. Each was the mother of a tiny boy-baby, and, accidentally, one of them rolled over on hers in the night, and killed it. At midnight she took the little one softly to the other woman's bed, and laid him in her arms, then crept back with the living

child. The next morning, on waking, the cheated woman felt that it was a stranger she held in her arms. She accused the woman of having stolen her child, and placed her dead one in her arms. So they quarreled about it, each claiming the living infant. Finally, one of them proposed going to King Solomon to have the matter settled: the other agreed; and together they went, each feeling certain the king would decide in her favor.

Solomon was offering sacrifice to the Lord before the ark of the covenant when they saw him. He was quite a young man then, but full of wisdom, and "the grace of God was upon him." Each one told her story, to which he listened respectfully. Solomon was for a moment puzzled, then said to a servant, Go bring a sword, then cut the child in two, and give each woman a part. The man took the little one by the feet, and was about to execute the bloody order, when the real mother rushed toward him quicker than thought, exclaiming, Give him to the woman! don't kill my child! The other woman exclaimed, No! cut him in two! No, said the wise young king; that is the real mother (pointing to the one who objected to the murder); give the child to her.

This little incident is one of the many thrown in to show the wisdom of Solomon, and the depravity of the human heart where there is no living,

growing Christ within, sanctifying all things. The downward tendency of sin is so great and rapid that from the first sinful thought there is but a short distance to the most Heaven-daring crime. The tendency of almost every thing earthly is sinward. Man's nature, in his fallen condition, will gravitate in that direction, instead of Godward. Mingled with our purest and holiest desires and acts is the fearful taint of sin.

Some flowers of Eden we still inherit,
But the trail of the serpent is over them all.



ME-PHIB-O-SHETH.

“The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth.”

TRUTH, as a whole, is so vast that we can only grasp a small portion of it here and there—little gleams from the great Sun of Truth. Could we, with our finite minds, take in the whole truth in its vastness, we should grasp God in all his unutterable fullness—yea, we should be equal to God himself, which cannot be, as a part cannot equal the whole of a thing.

Perhaps no character has been so misunderstood and misrepresented as that of Me-phib-o-sheth. We shall never know the whole truth about him till we have put on the garments of salvation in the other world, and walk with him in white under the shade-trees of eternal life. Some have accused him of the basest ingratitude to the best of benefactors; others have taken his part, and blamed the villainy of Ziba and the impatience of David. Let me have the pleasing task of vindicating, to some extent, this truly bitter character. Let me go to the secret spring of his sorrows, and show how the sparkling wine of life was changed to gall and

wormwood by the force of outward circumstances. In treading life's narrow pathway, right in the bleeding foot-prints of Me-phib-o-sheth might have been a cold, bitter, hard woman, but for the grace of God. I know not how many angels may be even now guarding my path, lest at any time I dash my foot against a stone.

Me-phib-o-sheth was the only son of Jonathan, and the grandson of Saul, the first king of Israel. His mother's name is unknown—she probably died while he was an infant. In 2 Sam. iv. 4, we find the key that unlocks the whole mystery of his following life. Why does the inspired historian, in the midst of the great and stirring national events of that eventful time—in the very center of the narrative of the death of Ish-bo-sheth, a great prince—stop to tell of the fall of a little child from the arms of its nurse? I have seen a great chess-player, in the midst of a most intensely-interesting game, when he had his adversary's king completely in his power, look up in his face, smile sweetly, and move a *pawn away off in a remote corner* of the board. He always had a great object behind that indifferent move. So with this little incident—the writer had a great object, imperfectly understood by us, in this little fact.

Me-phib-o-sheth was God's child, and he knew his character was, in after-years, to be assailed;

therefore here, at five years of age, we hear that he was lame on both his feet. Every time his name is mentioned we have repeated this sorrowful fact.

Saul and Jonathan were killed on Mount Gilboa, the latter leaving only this little child, in the family of Machir, perhaps in Gibeath, the royal residence of the king. David was carrying terror before him, as he led his conquering armies through the land. The whole country was in confusion. The house of the dead king was scattered to the four winds.

At this time Me-phen-ezer was five years old. He was taken up by his nurse, and, in her hurry, she let him fall to the ground, crushing both little feet at one blow. His ankles were both dislocated—bones, muscles, and flesh, mashed and bruised in such a manner that recovery was hopeless. What a painful journey, as he was carried in haste, fainting, on the back of his nurse, to a place of security! One cannot realize how much pain a crushed limb can give until it has been realized in his own personal experience. Poor little Me-phen-ezer! how many times he fainted! How many times the nurse stopped to still his cries! how often she bathed the face of the fainting child! What pet words she used, as she held the little crushed feet in her hands, trying to ease his pain, I know not.

I hope she was kind to the poor little orphan—indeed, a true woman could not have been otherwise. Fearfully maimed for life, orphaned, and made homeless almost at one blow! Dear child, yours is indeed a dreary outlook on life. But He who regards the sparrow's fall will guide thee, will raise thee up a nurse, will open the hearts and loose the purse-strings before thee. You, in your weakness, will be more powerful than your grandfather in his proudest days. You will find a warm place in hearts seemingly made of cast-iron. Walls of ice around hearts will be thawed and changed into a vapor of love at your coming.

When they had reached a place of safety, the nurse found his feet so crushed and swollen that recovery was hopeless. How long he was confined to his bed, what kind of medicines were used, what doctors and nurses he had, I know not. I know that he suffered intense pain—sometimes like red-hot needles running through his feet, then as if they were under a millstone, then again a red-hot iron on them—sometimes as if a hungry bird, with bill and sharp claws, were tearing him in pieces. I know that fever raged within his young veins—possibly he was delirious. His tongue, parched and blistered, could scarcely lisp the name of that mother he never saw. Perhaps he prayed to die.

“How do you know all that?” says one; “the

Bible does not say so." I know it because pain is an old-fashioned thing, and its effects were then very much as they are now. I know a good deal about human hearts, and, after all, sin, suffering, pain, and death, are as common now and act precisely as they did when this little boy suffered. Personal experience and observation have taught us too that when he came, after months, it may be years, of suffering, from that sick-room, he was frail, delicate, sensitive, keenly alive to every touch—physical strength gone, intellectual and spiritual powers expanded.

While he was shut in from the outer world, he was shut up with God. The Shekinah dwelt in that sick-room; visions of angels, such as the unsuffering never saw, were every-day sights to his eyes. Finally, the fever over, flesh again being renewed, color coming once more to the cheeks, brightness to the eyes, he returns to the world, with a spirituality far in advance of those around him, a helpless, hopeless cripple for life! How trying it was to hear the doctors and nurses say, Poor boy! he will never walk again! He must be a child in arms forty, fifty, perhaps eighty, years; a man in thought, feeling, size, intellect—a babe in power; a perfect man, save those deformed feet. Such was Me-phib-o-sheth. Henceforth he is to hobble through life, a painful sight to those who love him

best. Some will ridicule, some will thrust their unwelcome pity on him. Useless to himself, and a burden to his friends, life is almost unbearable; but the grace of God was as full, rich, and free for him as for his afflicted children now. That very affliction was the white-winged angel of salvation to his soul, and every pain that sent its fiery dart through his body was a blow from the Divine Sculptor, chipping here and there in order to bring out a more beautiful piece of art for the decoration of the many-mansioned house eternal. God rained with his love every tear shed by that suffering child.

The subsequent history of Me-phib-o-sheth proves that he was made miserable by his misfortunes. He ever felt, even while at the king's table, that he was nothing but a poor, miserable dependent, that even kindness could not make happy.

As Me-phib-o-sheth sat at the king's table because of the love that David bore for the slain Jonathan, the chosen friend of his youth, so do we poor, helpless cripples, lame and deformed by sin, sit at the table of the King of kings because of the friendship that existed, before the foundations of the earth were laid, between the Father and the Son slain on Calvary. Instead of feeling that we are miserable dependents, and looking with a scowl of envy, like Me-phib-o-sheth, let us make the Mas-

ter's table bright and joyous with our smiles of appreciation and loving words. Let us make the King glad to have us there, by being happy and enjoying his rich bounties.

Dear boys, there is a worse lameness than crushed feet—it is to be crippled in the head; yea, a still worse deformity—a crushed, crippled soul, a spiritual nature deformed by sin and unbelief. We cannot help ugly bodies, but we can make our souls as beautiful as the angels, by keeping them unspotted from the world in the blood of the Lamb, clothed with the garments of Christ's righteousness, and ornamented with meekness, love, and holiness.



ABIJAH.

“Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.”

ABIJAH was the son of the wicked Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused the land to sin. The iniquities of Israel were becoming more an insult to high Heaven. Heaven is high above the bad man—so high that all the Jacob’s ladders of earth cannot reach it. Heaven is in the heart which loves God and keeps his commandments.

Jeroboam, lost to all sense of manly integrity, became more and more wicked, and finally made himself priest. This was a crime of the most fearful character, and *infinite patience was exhausted*.

About this time, Abijah, the young son of Jeroboam, fell sick. He was a boy perhaps twelve years of age, as children are rarely responsible under that age. His mother, in great distress, asked the king what she should do. He advised her to disguise herself, that none would recognize her as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to the Prophet Ahijah, and get his advice. Probably the hatred of the wicked king extended to his wife; so she

prepared for the journey by taking a present of ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and went to Shiloh to see Ahijah. He was old and blind, but the Spirit of the Lord, swifter than mother's love—the same Spirit that moved on the face of the foaming waters in the twilight-dawning of creation—flew to him, and informed him that the wife of Jeroboam was coming, then dropped on his lips the right words to say. The same Spirit is with us now, ready to inspire our words.

She came in, and told her story. He then reminded her of her husband—how God had selected him to be the king of a great nation—that he had rent the kingdom from another, though he (Jeroboam) was not upright like his servant David, who had kept his commandments and followed his law. He told her that Jeroboam did more evil than any king before him—that he had made gods, and molten images, and groves, and he refused to acknowledge and be guided by him. Now, through the prophet, he pronounces the most fearful curses on him and all his house. Only one in whose veins the blood of Jeroboam flowed should die in peace, and that one a little boy, who loved God in spite of the wickedness surrounding him. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the forest should receive orders to eat all that guilty house. We cannot sin alone—some one else will be affected by it.

Only the little one, Abijah, should be saved, because in him was found some good thing toward God. The Bible does not tell us what that good thing was—perhaps only a few wandering thoughts struggling Godward—a few holy desires, a strange hungering after righteousness that God could not consistently fulfill. Yes, this child had, in spite of bad blood, bad example, in the midst of the most corrupting influences, remained *somewhat pure*.

Leaving an example to us, he shows that, though we are defiled by touching pitch, if we love God and trust him, all the pitch on earth cannot harm us. There are characters that are so quicksilver in their purity that it seems almost impossible to sully them. They were made superior to the common people, and they remain.

Ahijah said to the queen, When you return, the child shall die just as you enter the door. After this interview, she returned to Tirzah, and, as she entered the door, the child breathed his last. Poor boy! to die without a loving mother near! Happy boy! to be taken to heaven before the seeds of sin had time to sprout, bear the black blossoms of misery, and ripen into the harvest of eternal despair! Happy boy! in spite of the sins surrounding you, you mounted upward, on the wings of God's love and mercy, to the blissful home of the blest. Had he lived, he would have grown to a

wicked manhood, died a horrible death, and been eternally lost. God's word is sure: all the rest of this wicked family were lost—he alone was saved.

In this story death rises up before us not as a grim destroyer, but in a character entirely new to us—as a blessed angel of mercy and goodness—a loving friend, into whose arms we gladly fly, knowing that he simply came to carry this child away from a polluted earthly crown to an eternal one in heaven, and to an everlasting kingdom, in which no Nebat's son shall ever enter, to cause the land to sin, *because in him was found some good thing toward the Lord.*

If Abijah, in the midst of such circumstances, could retain his purity, and have God reward him in this way, how should we, who have all the holy influences surrounding us, live—we who are wafted heavenward by the rich perfume of ten thousand ascending prayers? How should we, who see life glorified and rainbow-tinted through the crimson tide of Calvary, live? Surely God, in looking into our hearts, sees a great deal of good toward him. *"To whom much is given, of him much shall be required."* Let us do our work well. One hour of work well done is a grand prophecy of another hour better spent. With our feet firmly fixed on the Rock of Ages, our hands clinging to the cross, we can do all things through him who strengtheneth us.

THE WIDOW'S SON.

"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."
Isa. xxxiii. 16.

ONCE I was making some corrections in this little volume, and the idea occurred to me that the most serious defect was a constant going over, again and again, of the same thing. I tried to remedy this error, and found it impossible, without a sacrifice of truth. Were these stories imaginary they might be original; but, coming directly from the Fountain-head of all truth, and every character real, made of the same material, prompted by the same Spirit, made by the same divine model, how can there be originality? or how can I avoid repetition? How am I to make variety where none exists? I dare not trifle with truth. What would my grown-up Sabbath-school children say if I were to put Moses on the altar instead of Isaac? or the Shunammite's son in the bulrush-basket instead of Moses?

The basis upon which the earth rests is pure, solid, simple granite, the same everywhere in color, substance, and elementary principle, equally hard,

whether dug from under the burning sun of the tropics, or beneath the ice of Greenland. On top of this primary base are many other *strata*, all differing from each other, and from the granite foundation, but, like the primitive colors of the rainbow, blending into a beautiful whole. Thus it is with these children—each one was a living, human, suffering soul, body, and mind, like the children I teach, Sabbath after Sabbath. All lived on earth—all pointed to Jesus. Like a child's copy-book, every line was an imitation of the first, more or less perfect. These children are much alike: the same old tune, with one key-note and a thousand variations, made by external circumstances—the age in which he or she lived, climate, soil, and the ever-varying conditions of human life—the original base of their character, like the granite in the earth, the same—they all rested, more or less firmly, on the Rock of Ages—all have a lesson of encouragement, or a warning, for us.

On opening my Bible this morning, accidentally—providentially rather, for in the music of a Christian's life there are no accidentals—my eye rested on these words: "He raiseth the widow's son." I began to read, thinking only of Elisha and the Shunammite, when, seeing the name of Elijah, the whole beautiful story of Zarephath mapped itself on my mind. On reading it, I find that Elisha is

a repetition of Elijah; so is this incident in his life. Both of these prophets were holy men of God; both of them found a true and faithful friend in a woman. Each of these women had an only son; the sons died, and were restored by the prophets. The difference—one woman was a poor widow; the other rich, and had a husband.

In 1 Kings xvii. the story is told in all the beautiful simplicity of Bible-language. During the famine predicted by Elijah, the Lord commanded him to go to the brook Cherith, and remain there, drinking of its waters, and being fed by the ravens, spending his time in solitary prayer and quiet communion with God. I think those infidels who believe most implicitly in the story of Romulus, Remus, and Mamma Wolf, hoot most at Elijah's primitive style of living at this time of life.

At last the brook dried up. *Then, and not till then*, did the word of the Lord come to him, saying, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." How sorrowful he must have been, as he traveled so far, on foot, over a land parched and blistered by the burning sun—as he saw fields of olives, and orchards, once so green and flourishing, now dried up, and falling to pieces around him! Probably little children, with uncombed hair and fam

ine-pinchèd features, ran to the door to see him as he passed. I don't know if they were aware of the fact that he held the clouds in his hand, and could bring or withhold rain; if they did, how bitter and dreadful must have been the curses that fell on his devoted head! How sad was his heart, as he saw the desolation, and knew that in one moment he could flood the land, and set in motion every stream, and send new life through every parched tree, and cause joy and gladness where now all was desolation and despair! *Yet he must wait for God to give the order.* A well-disciplined army awaits the order from its general. *If he perished, God must be obeyed.* The keenest suffering in the world is to feel that we hold the happiness of immortal souls in our keeping; and yet we must allow them to be miserable, because, in making them happy, God would be displeased. How much more distressing when the happiness of a whole nation is depending on us!

Zarephath is a city in Zidon, on the Mediterranean Sea. On entering this city, Elijah saw a poor, famine-stricken woman, gathering sticks, and he said, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." Elijah knew, by a direct inspiration from God, that this was the woman to whom he was sent. She, inspired in the same way perhaps, started for it immediately. This

prompt obedience seems quite strange. A starving woman and her perishing son, in a famine-stricken country, to give, *immediately*, to an entire stranger, a little water in a vessel, is quite remarkable. Self-preservation, mother-love, the selfishness engendered by suffering, and indifference to strangers, all seem to war against the singular generosity, which can be accounted for on no other principle than a direct whisper of God on the conscience of the heathen woman—as our preachers say, a “witness of the Spirit.” As she started to get the water, her own tongue parched and dry for want of it, Elijah called her with a still greater request, selfish in the highest degree when looked at from a human stand-point—“Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.”

He who possesses a *growing* faith in God—not an ignorant, blind belief, but a faith founded upon a principle, and a knowledge of the God we worship—has a mine of wealth within his own soul that he may work through all ages, and it will never be exhausted till God himself has finished his course. Remove a mountain indeed!—that is quite a small thing comparatively.

Thus far we see only the woman's faith. Elijah knew for a certainty what he was about. Had he not tried God? Had he ever been disappointed? Little boys, would you find peace? Find it in

Jesus. He knows all your troubles; he has passed through that period of life, and sanctified it for all time.

When Elijah asked for bread, she said, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Extreme poverty, despair, and hospitality, with a dim idea of pleasing God, all struggling together in her heart! Finally, hospitality, upheld by faith, conquered. Yes, I will make a cake, and share it with you, and together we will die. It is death any way—what matters a few moments, more or less, of life? Here is a strange-looking man, in appearance a prophet; if I divide my last crust with him, perhaps his God will be pleased, and may be I shall be rewarded. Heaven will be brighter to me and my son, and earth can be no darker. Yes, stranger though you are, I will divide my all with you.

Elijah then said, "Fear not: go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son." After my hunger is satisfied, if there is any thing left, you take it.

Was ever a woman so tried? O how eagerly she looked at that little cake! Instead of her hos-

pitality being appreciated and enjoyed, it is put to the severest test. Seeing her struggle between kindness and hunger, and her willingness to obey, he then said, "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." Thus it always is—first the test, then the promise; after that the fulfillment—a blessed trinity in all things.

She did as Elijah commanded, and he, she, and her house, did eat bread many days. "And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

O men of God, as Elijah of old, be faithful in proclaiming the word of the Lord! O widows, trust in the God of Elijah! Never mind if the last cake *is* on the table; it matters not if you do scrape against the bottom of the barrel—it is sweet music to your Father's ears, when faith is in the heart. God is the same now that he was then—yea, nearer; for, having been incarnate, and "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," we have his sympathy in a far more precious degree than did Elijah.

Soon after these things, while Elijah was still living with the widow of Zarephath, it came to pass that the little boy was taken sick—saved from

the famine by a miracle only to sicken and die. Truly, "God moves in a mysterious way." This poor woman was saved from one sorrow to fall more hopelessly into another—out of one distress into another; but with every sorrow comes the grace to bear it, if we have the faith to receive it. Out of fiery trials into the deep waters—out of the cradle into the coffin. But we bless God that deep waters, fiery trials, cradle, and coffin, are so many stepping-stones "to pleasures evermore."

This poor woman sees her only child dying. He is the last tie that binds her sorrowful heart to earth. When he is gone, existence will be a blank—a burden almost unbearable—no one to love. *A childless widow*—nothing to energize or stimulate. Does any one who reads this book stand entirely *alone in the world*? Do you feel that no one cares whether you live or die? that your honor or dishonor is equally a subject of indifference? When the last earthly hope had vanished, then you knew how to sympathize with this Gentile woman of Zarephath, as she saw her last tie ruthlessly snapped by a *seemingly* rude Providence.

Reaching out after sympathy, she sought her friend Elijah, who still remained with her, and she said, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Scripture is

silent as to the nature of this sin, therefore I shall be. Elijah took the little child—the one gleam of sunlight in that desolate home, the light of his mother's life, and joy of her heart—out of his mother's arms, and carried him up in a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. Then we hear this great man—the hero of Carmel, the Prophet of Fire—this man without human ties, and seemingly without human infirmities—this man whose virtues are so great that he is lifted up so far above us that inspiration had to remind us that “he was a man of like passions as other men.” With his girdle of hair, his long, flowing beard, and firm-set face, we see him as he wrestles with God in prayer, by the side of that lifeless little form. No longer a type of the prophetic dispensation, no longer the “Decalogue incarnate,” but the man of “like passions” on bended knees, as a child, he pleads with God his Father; and he “cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times [in like manner did Elisha restore the Shunammite's son, as is recorded in 2 Kings iv. 32-35], and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.” And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah,

and the child revived. And Elijah took the child out unto his mother, and Elijah said, "See, thy son liveth."

Again appears the great defect in my book, repetition: "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." This is the grand *finale* to every story I ever wrote or related to my Sunday-school class. Repetition is a good or bad thing, according to the thing or circumstance repeated. I never heard of any one being distressed at a repetition of breakfast-time, when the pantry was full, and a good cook in the kitchen. I never knew any one to object to the rising and setting of the sun, though it has repeated that process six thousand years. The farmer enjoys the ever-recurring change from seed-time to harvest. It is the disagreeabilities of life we don't want repeated. If the lives of these "Children of the Bible" are pure and holy, and *we* are benefited by studying them, then let us have a repetition. O for a constant repeating of the lives of good and useful men and women! May each generation be an improvement on the last, and may Thy kingdom soon come!

Smith, the author of the "Bible Dictionary," says that the Prophet Jonah was this son of the widow of Zarephath.

IRREVERENCE PUNISHED.

“And he went up from thence unto Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.” 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

A PLAIN, holy, bald-headed man, had just seen one of the most remarkable sights ever witnessed on the earth. His best friend and instructor had escaped the greedy jaws of death by mounting a chariot of fire, and, with flying steeds of flame, had gone to his mansion on high. Elisha had picked up his falling mantle, had smitten the river Jordan, and passed through on dry land, and was now quietly journeying from Jericho to Carmel. His friends, the sons of the prophets, wished him to remain in the city, and told him all the advantages to be derived from a residence there, then honestly informed him that the water was not good; so he took some salt in a cruse, went to the fountain-head, and cast it in, in the name of the Lord, thus healing the waters forever.

He was quietly passing along, directly after this, on his journey, thinking no evil, when a crowd of thoughtless children gathered around him, and began to ridicule him, for the simple reason that his head was bald, and they wanted fun, and cared not at whose expense. Some commentators say they were grown men, but the Bible says little children; and, for the honor of humanity and the city of Jericho, let us believe the Bible is true, and children are meant. Surely grown people *were*, or *ought to have been*, in better business than lounging around the suburbs of a great city, although I have seen men in small towns and cities standing around the corner drinking-shops, doing nothing but smoking, talking idly, and gazing at the passers-by. The city of Jericho was very wicked—the very foundations were laid in blood—and there had been many cruel deeds done there, and these children were the descendants of the wicked founders. They may have *meant* no harm, but they *did* harm. They insulted God in the person of his prophet; they treated age with irreverence; they laughed at an old man's bald head, hurt his feelings, disturbed his communion with God, disgusted his soul, broke the commands of our Lord, and violated that beautiful rule which is the summing up of all the golden grains of goodness and holiness.

Yes, children; if you insult a good man, you in-

sult the God whose Spirit dwells in him—you throw a stone at the great white throne of God. These boys were about half grown, and were as good as the average children of wealthy parents, who are raised in idleness, of the present day. Our pupils, dear teachers, would have done the same thing under the same circumstances. I am afraid they do even worse sometimes. These boys may have been taught better, but, in a spirit of mischief, and forgetful of the reverence due to age and religion, they mocked, saying, “Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.”

The prophet now throws aside in one moment the character of the meek Elisha, takes on the stern virtue of Elijah, and, at the command of God, cursed them in the name of the Lord. Jesus, on one occasion, and only one, cursed—that is, condemned, or frowned on, an object.

I don't know if the bears came immediately and tore these children to pieces, but there is reason to believe they did, judging from our knowledge of God's judgments. Ananias and Sapphira fell dead in a moment. Uzziah, for a smaller offense, died instantly. Achan was stoned at once. God's judgments fall quickly sometimes. Before Elisha's voice had ceased to echo among the Judean hills, the bears came, and the cries of the children were almost united with the curse of the prophet. There

were two bears and forty and two children. O what a day of anguish for the mothers of Jericho! and why? Because parents and teachers had failed, somehow, to inspire those children with reverence for God's minister.

Children, have any of you failed in your duty to God's prophets for so small a thing as a bald head? I know it is fashionable to tease the dear old Elishas of this day, and they join in the merriment against themselves, considering what is inside their heads more than the mere outer decoration of flowing hair. But that is not the point at all. God, in this instance, did not think of the shining pate of his servants; but he did see, with an eye of burning wrath, the irreverence in the hearts of these wicked boys.

Now, learn a lesson from the youth of Jericho, you American boys—yea, a lesson for you Celestials, for some of you will read these lines. Take warning by these. The day of wrath may linger, but it will come by and by. Respect God's people; reverence his house and his holy Sabbaths; pray for and love his ministers; touch not their sensitive point, whether it be a bald head or a deformity, either moral, mental, or spiritual; love them, and help them bear their burdens. You will be old some day, *if you live long enough*, and will need kindness yourselves. As you sow, so shall you reap.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.” Eccl. xi. 1.

THE Prophet Elisha, on his way to Shunem, passed a great lady's house, and stopped to take the evening's meal with her. Like most preachers, he made himself agreeable to the lady, and she likewise to him. Probably, besides being agreeable, she placed before him the best her larder contained, and, as man's nature is prone to weakness for the delicacies of the table, and as preachers are, at best, but men, and human nature the same in all ages, I have no doubt Elisha's taste in this respect was as keen as ours.

After he had been stopping with her a few times, quite a strong friendship grew up between them. He improved so much on acquaintance that one day she said to her husband, “Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick,” so he will feel at home with us.

That dear little room! How I should have enjoyed sitting on the stool, writing stories about Jesus for the little ones, by the light of that candle! How quiet and cozy it must have been! I wish all our preachers had just such a one. But they, I fear, would want more furniture than a table, bed, and candlestick. Nineteenth-century ministers require gas-light, *armoires*, bureaux, and libraries.

One hot summer's day, Elisha lay on his bed, thinking how nice it was to have such a room, and the idea occurred to him that he would like to offer the woman a substantial evidence of his gratitude for her kindness. He called his servant, and said, Gehazi, what shall I do for our friends? They are so kind to me, and I would like to offer them some sort of reward. Shall I ask a favor of the captain of the guard, or the king? Gehazi said, Perhaps they would like a son. Elisha made a few more inquiries, and finally told her that within a year the Lord would send her a son.

Time passed on, and the promised son came, bringing joy and gladness to the hearts of this hospitable family. Elisha still passed back and forth on his circuit among the people. I suppose he was presiding elder, or bishop, then—at any rate, *he was on a circuit*. He always stopped with his friends, and many a merry romp the old man had

with the great woman's baby in the dear "little chamber on the wall."

One day the little boy went out in the field to watch his father and the reapers. While standing there in the hot sun, he suddenly cried out in great pain, "My head! my head!" His father called one of the lads, and sent his son home in his arms. His mother was much alarmed, and clasped him to her heart—soothed and comforted him, using such restoratives as she had; still that fearful pain continued. All the morning the little one lay in its mother's arms, tossing about, crying with pain, until noon, then he died. She carried him in her arms to Elisha's room, weeping bitterly as she went, then called her husband, and requested him to send her a servant. The servant came. She ordered him to saddle one of the asses, that she might go to Mount Carmel to see Elisha. He could speak words of heavenly comfort to her aching heart. Her husband tried to persuade her not to go, but she insisted. He told her the night was dark, there was no moon, the way was long and rugged—better wait till morning. The agony of her soul was so great that waiting was impossible, so she went with the servant, in great haste, to Carmel. Elisha saw her coming, and sent Gehazi to meet her, and inquire if all was well. Without reply, she went to the man of God, fell before him, and caught him

by his feet, in her great grief. Gehazi tried to pull her away, but Elisha forbade him, saying that the woman was in great trouble, and the Lord had hidden the cause from him. She told him her baby was dead. Elisha, in surprise, handed his staff to Gehazi, saying, Go and lay it on the child's face, and do not speak to any one on the way. What strange things the Spirit inspires!

The woman refused to go until the prophet went with her. When they arrived, they saw the little boy lying cold and stiff in death, on the bed, in "the chamber on the wall." Then Elisha sent the mother away, while he closed the door and wrestled with God in prayer. Seeing that his prayer availed not—*rather, that it inspired other methods by which he might restore happiness to the stricken parents*—"he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." He then sent his servant to call the boy's mother. She came; and he said, "Take up thy son."

We have heard of persons almost dead being restored by having warm, living blood poured in

their veins—we have read of their being restored by means of animal magnetism—but, certainly, none but God could have inspired the heart of Elisha with this strange notion. God's ways are past finding out. To Naaman, the leper, he said, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." To the people of Israel the command came to take Jericho by silently marching around it, then making a great noise with rams' horns. To David he said, Take five small, smooth, round stones, to kill Goliath of Gath, and scatter the Philistine army. To Samson the instrument of destruction was the jaw-bone of an ass. To make a dry road through the sea, bring water out of dead rocks, and plagues on the enemies of God, required only a little rod in the hand of Moses.

In this story we see these words beautifully illustrated: "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." The woman's work in fitting up the room for the prophet was a little crumb cast on the waves by her generous hand. She thought not of reward. With the first smile of her infant she gathered a crumb cast on the waters a year previous, and in his death her soul was humbled and strengthened, and she was happy in his restoration to life. We learn from this complete little history what a blessed thing it is to show kindness to God's chosen ministers. We have

our Elishas now—men just as good, just as intelligent, and spiritual—men who, through God, hath spoken and called sons from a worse death (though they cannot perform miracles), and as worthy of our love and reverence as he was of the Shunammite's; and, though we may not be able to give them “a little chamber on the wall, a table, stool, bed, and candlestick,” we can at least give them kind words, loving smiles, and show a generous forbearance of their faults, and an appreciation of their virtues.

As Moses and Joshua were to the Israelites, so our ministers are to us; and to each of us we can have it said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;” and a rich reward awaits all such beyond the swelling waves of the Jordan of death.

*THE LITTLE TUG-BOAT.**

“Be instant in season, out of season.” “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

LITTLE girls, you are now wondering what is coming. I wrote the story for you, then pondered over an appropriate title. Listen while I tell you what a little girl once did. While the children of Israel were in captivity, one of them became the servant of Naaman's wife. Naaman was captain of the guard under the king, a man of great intellect, wealth, power, and much beloved. But (ah! there comes in that terrible word—so many are rich, talented, beautiful—but “the skeleton in the cupboard” is a melancholy truth) Naaman, the beloved, was a leper. Among the people

* Being at a loss for a name for my story, one came into my mind that is expressive, to say the least of it. I remember once seeing a little boat puffing away at a furious rate on the Mississippi River, a large steamer quietly following it. On inquiry, a gentleman informed me that it was a tug-boat, towing into port a disabled steamer for repairs. This little maid reminded me of the tug-boat, as she towed into the haven of eternal blessedness the magnificent General Naaman.

of the East, this disease was the worst ever known. It affected the whole system, and was so loathsome and contagious that the afflicted one had to remain in a house alone, never touching or going near any one. When one passed by, the leper was compelled by law to lay his hand on his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, and cry, Unclean, unclean, unclean! Naaman was not so bad as this, but the disease was incurable, and he was rapidly growing worse. Seeing her master so afflicted, she felt a sympathy for him, and one day said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

Little Sunday-school girls who love Jesus, do you ever say to your fathers, brothers, and gentlemen friends, "Would God you would love Jesus! he would save you from your sins?" By faith I see this servant-girl as she thus addresses her mistress. No doubt Naaman had tried all the doctors and all the drugs then known; but, alas! God had laid his iron hand of affliction upon him, and he must suffer on till released by relentless death.

Some one, hearing the little girl speak so hopefully—for she was a happy, brave child—told Naaman of her remark; and, as a drowning man will catch at a straw, so Naaman determined to get a letter of introduction from his sovereign to the king of Israel, and see what could be done for him.

The king of Syria therefore wrote to the king of Israel, and sent the letter by Naaman. The king of Israel was highly indignant at having a leper sent to him. He rent his clothes, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

But the little maiden, inspired by the Holy Ghost, knew what she was about, and how it would be. Somehow Elisha, the prophet, heard the news. Naaman was very rich and grand, and went with his chariots and horsemen in splendid style, causing much envy and jealousy as he passed along, for in those days people loved fine things as well as we do, and envied those who possessed them. Elisha accordingly went to the king, and asked him why he rent his clothes. The matter was explained, and Elisha said, Send him to me; he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So Naaman the Great drove up in his fine chariot to the humble cottage of Elisha, and sent in a messenger, expecting to see the prophet come out humbly and listen to his story, quite overpowered by so distinguished a guest. He waited a short time, vibrating between hope and fear, and the answer came, and *such a message!* Little girls, take your Bibles, and turn to 2 Kings v. 10, and you

will find these words: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Truly an insulting message to send to His Excellency, the magnificent general.

"Naaman was wroth." Most any of us would have been—to be told, after coming in so much grandeur, to go and wash ourselves. What an ugly insinuation! But God, by his Holy Spirit, does strange things sometimes. We do not comprehend him, yet we love him all the better for "making darkness and mystery his pavilion."

Naaman said, "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the rivers of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? And he turned and went away in a rage." O human nature! human nature! thy name is unbelief! His servants then came forward and said, If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, you would have done it; but such a little insignificant thing—only wash seven times in Jordan! Why? It was a disease, and could not be scrubbed off like common dirt. Why seven times? Why not take one good wash, and be done with it? What was the virtue in the waters of the Jordan?

It was quite a commonplace little stream. Surely Abana and Pharpar are better.

Thus Naaman and all other sinners reason, then wonder at the consequences. Had he kept on with his argument, he might have convinced every one that Abana and Pharpar were better. On second consideration, he concluded to take the advice of his servants, and try it. O Lord, sanctify the influence that even servants exert over us, and may it redound to thy glory!

While the Holy Spirit was playing upon human heart-strings, touching the various cords of pride, doubt, humility, in Naaman, *a little girl held in her little brown hand the destiny of two mighty nations*. Kings were trembling on their thrones. "Consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." Already her few earnest words had given birth to a bright hope in the heart of a sufferer. Her simple speech had harnessed the chariot, and dressed in holiday attire the servants of her master. They had sent him to Elisha, Elisha to the king, and brought back the ungallant reply from the prophet. Now they are to undress the general, plunge him "seven times" in a dirty little stream, in sight of his servants. I tell you, little girls, the pride was washed out of him when he arose the last time.

Naaman went to the river Jordan, not believing

much in it; still, the mere act of going shows that he had a little faith. "It may be so—I will go and try it." So he went. He gave one plunge, and said, "Now, while I am about it, I might as well go through with it;" so he gave another, and another, his faith increasing with every dip; finally, the seventh plunge, when—O joy!—to his great astonishment and delight, he came up with the loathsome sore gone entirely, and his whole person fair and beautiful as an infant fresh from the green fields and amaranthine bowers of baby-land. He returned, delighted with the result, to tell Elisha that now he knew, for a certainty, that there was none other God save the God of Elisha—a soul saved perhaps, a corrupted body purified, through the influence of a captive servant-girl. Surely God chooses the weak things of earth to confound the mighty.

Naaman, out of the gratitude of an honest heart, wished to pay Elisha for his great recovery, but the prophet refused. He was sufficiently rewarded in the praises that Naaman rendered to his God. A Christian desires no glory, no praise, to any but Jesus. He is simply a sinner, bowed down by the dreadful leprosy of sin, and when He washes the stain away—not seven times in Jordan, but once in His own precious blood—there is no room in his heart for any thing but love. Shame on those

Christians who are afraid of blame, and still more on those who expect praise for doing their duty!

We all have consciences, and, in a gospel-land, it is reasonable to suppose that all have Bibles, and "the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth;" then, as individuals, let us do all the good we can, thinking of nothing, fearing but our God. If we are censured, let us look into our hearts, and be sure we are doing our duty; then what matters it? If God sends his Holy Spirit into our hearts in such power that we cannot sin, how are we better than others? Under the same circumstances, with their temperaments and temptations, we might have done worse. We know not what we can stand until we are tried.

In this story we see what influence a few simple words may exert over the lives of others. The child spoke from the fullness of her sympathetic little heart. The Holy Spirit attended the words, and we see the result—at least, a part of it—eternity alone can reveal the whole. Always speak kindly. Aim at great things—I mean, struggle to be truthful, pure, holy—in other words, be like God as revealed to you in the character of his Son.

JOASH.

"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Rev xix. 6.

A HAZIAH, king of Judah, was slain by order of Jehu, king of Israel. This enraged Athaliah, his mother, who was a wicked woman, to such an extent that she sent forth and slew all the seed-royal that she could get. Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, daughter of Athaliah, and wife of Jehoiada, the high-priest, took the infant Joash, the youngest son of Ahaziah, and his nurse, and hid them in the temple.

A careless observer would say, What a coincidence! how strange! The Messiah was to be a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and of the tribe of Judah. How very slight the probability now is of his coming down in that way! Here we see a wicked woman, lost to every womanly feeling, seeking revenge, and murdering the children of her dead son. To such depths will sin lead the human soul, when the heart-angel becomes a demon. When once baptismal vows are forgotten, God is forsaken, and he withdraws his grace

from us. By the merest accident, humanly speaking, a little infant, scarcely a year old, is saved from the massacre—stolen from among the other children by his aunt. What inspired this good woman to save this child, the baby? The other children were more likely to live; they had passed the perils of infancy, cutting teeth, measles, whooping-cough, or whatever diseases were prevalent among infants of those days—he had it all to pass through. Uninspired by God, she would have saved one of the others. God has one grand, magnificent plan for the good of his people and his own eternal glory. Our finite minds cannot comprehend it, in its vastness and unity. We, saints and sinners, Jew and Gentile, male and female, grown people and children, are each one, voluntarily or reluctantly, filling our places and performing our parts, but not disturbing the unity of the scheme. Once in awhile seeming accidents bring to light bright glimpses of His purposes. This is one of them, coming in so naturally that we almost forget God's part of the work.

Joash and his nurse are hidden a short time in the house of his aunt, then carried to the temple, where he remains six years, Jehoiada, the high-priest, all these years instructing the loyal people scattered about over the kingdom, and preparing their hearts to receive the little king. His aunt

was training his young mind, and directing his little feet to walk in wisdom's ways.

Athaliah all this time was on the throne, and the people were groaning under a worse than Egyptian bondage. When Jehoiada could safely do so, he armed his men with spears and shields, provided by David long before his death. He then appointed three places in the temple; the trumpeters too were there. I wonder why people always make a noise when they are happy. Joy is always boisterous, while grief is quiet, O so quiet! A heart bubbling over with happiness will be heard; one may break with grief, and we hear no sound.

All things being in readiness, the child was led in by his aunt, and the ceremonies of the coronation began. The oil of consecration was poured on his young head—the crown worn by Saul, David, Solomon, and many others, was placed upon it—the testimony put in his hand; and he is no longer a child—fanciful, frolicking in the sunbeams—but king of a mighty nation.

The ceremonies being completed, the trumpeters blew their trumpets; the people clapped their hands, and cried, "God save the king!" Only think of a child seven years of age creating so much joy in the nation! Every child cannot be a king here, but he can create joy, and fit himself for a member of the grand coronation-party, when we shall

“bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all.” The old high-priest was the happiest one there, because to him and his wife the people were indebted for their joy. No wonder those down-trodden Jews were happy. Athaliah, the grandmother of the infant monarch, had been ruling the kingdom with a rod of iron six years, since the death of Ahaziah. What an age those six years seemed, when spent in misery and degradation! These people who were looking for a Messiah to come from the tribe of Judah now see their last hope drowned in the blood of Ahaziah’s children. He cannot come from Jehosheba’s line, though she is the daughter of a king, because her husband is a Levite. The last star of hope is set forever, so far as they can see—all is darkness and despair. Their God has not only vacated the holy of holies, but actually left their hearts. What Samuel can lift the veil of futurity, and penetrate the mysteries of the mind of God? What can any of us do when hope has fled? Why, trust in God still. The grand old plan in his mind is still perfect, though every star fall from heaven. Athaliah, the terror of the people, Jehoiada and his wife, baby Joash—all are only perfecting the scheme, as they follow their different life-paths. When your last earthly friend has deserted you, your last nickel gone, health and strength fled, and

black despair is closing around you, still *trust in God*. No matter how dark and deep the ocean of trial, the sun still shines, though storms may come between. If we are God's children, bought and paid for, the receipt signed in blood on Calvary, he will see us safely anchored on the other side. Do you think he will allow the world to steal one of the jewels he bought to sparkle in his crown? No, never, never, never!

Imagine the joy and surprise of the people as they are called—some to protect, some to be the witnesses, and some *to make a noise*—on this grand festival occasion—the coronation of a direct male descendant of the tribe of Judah. Thus God's children are sometimes hidden from the world till circumstances bring them into notice. What cared these down-trodden Jews that it was a child? The blood of the royal David and Solomon was flowing in his young veins—their own precious king, after six long years of servitude and female usurpation.

While the little king stood by the pillar in the temple, his wicked grandmother, Athaliah, heard the people clapping their hands, and shouting, "God save the king!" and came to see what was the cause of it. The old woman was not accustomed to sounds of joy. She rent her clothes, and cried, "Treason! treason!" Jehoiada, the high-priest, then commanded the captains to take her out of

the house, but not to slay her in the temple. This command was gladly obeyed, and when they were near the king's palace she was slain. What a pity that happy day should have been marred by so terrible a deed! To rid the world of a tyrant *may be commendable*, but what a pity we cannot get rid of them without the shedding of blood!

The people, in their joy, then went to the temple of Baal, and broke down his altars and images, and slew his priest. Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the people, then between the little king and the people, that they should be the Lord's.

When fully established on the throne of his fathers, the land enjoying rest from all the attacks of their enemies, and from idolatry, they began repairing the temple, cutting down the groves, and breaking the images and altars of Baal. Jehoiada, I suppose, was the power veiled from sight, and through him and his judicious wife the prosperity of Israel lasted until the child was old enough to hold the reins of government in his own hands.

UZZIAH, THE LEPER.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

A ZARIAH, or Uzziah, the twelfth king of Judah, was the son of Amaziah and Jecholiah, of Jerusalem. He ascended the throne at the age of sixteen. Zachariah was the chief prophet of the land at that time. For several years Uzziah held sweet and constant intercourse with the God of his fathers. His young life was full of activity. He spent his time in improving his kingdom, by building cities and towns, digging wells, planting vineyards and olive-orchards. He also fought victorious battles. What an energetic granger he would have made! for he “loved husbandry.” Truly, a man who loves to see the green grass growing, the flowers blooming, and who loves to hear the birds singing, and enjoys nature—which is simply one of the robes God wears when he wishes to manifest himself to us—must have been a good man. Uzziah was so prosperous and happy, and he seemed to have lived in an atmosphere of love for several years, but “the high places were not taken down.”

All through the books of Kings and Chronicles we have this strange statement staring us in the face. It flashes out at us so unexpectedly—so and so was a good king, walked in the ways of his father, did this and that good thing, but—"the high places were not taken down." What does it mean? and why were they not taken down? Why was the fact repeated so often? Is it because there is a spiritual meaning inclosed in the words? Have we high places of pride, envy, or selfishness, in our hearts still untaken down? Surely the Old Testament is not a bare statement of dry facts. No, my dear children, the Bible is the inspired word of God, every syllable richly laden with a spiritual meaning, for the adornment of your minds and souls.

Uzziah was happy and prosperous as long as he trusted in his God. There seems to be between man's soul and his Maker a spiritual telegraphic wire, on which the messages of love fly quickly back and forth. Man prays; the Father leans over the jasper-walled city, smiles, remembers Calvary—the prayer is answered. Man's faith must be as omnipotent as God's power. These two principles in the scales of heaven must balance each other perfectly.

Uzziah's reign was longer than that of any other king of Judah; but, alas, such a reign! The lat-

ter part of it was dark and miserable, blighting all the glory of the first years. It comes not within the scope of this volume to state why Uzziah failed so sadly after he was fully established on the throne. One single sin, that required, perhaps, ten minutes for its commission, brought all the trouble. By one daring act of impiety this almost faultless young man brought ruin on himself, his family, and his whole kingdom—turned around, by his *one* daring act, the face of a reconciled Father, and changed it to one of frowning wrath. Uzziah, in his pure, brave boyhood, little dreamed that he would openly insult God in his own temple, in spite of love for him, and the entreaties of about fifty priests—that he would take a censer and offer incense to God—a fearful crime for one not born to execute that high office. He little thought that God would lay his hand in leprous judgment on him. But such are the facts: while burning the incense, a white spot arose on his forehead, and he was turned out of the temple, to dwell “in a several house,” alone, bitterly alone, until released from his suffering by the hand of death.

From the life of this man, it seems that one can love God, and be a Christian for years, then commit a fearful sin, and be lost forever. Uzziah *may have repented* while living alone—he had ample time for it; but suppose he had been struck dead,

as Ananias and Sapphira were—and they were Christians—dying with a black spot untouched by the blood of Christ, how could he have been saved? We must *abide* in Him day by day. Paul feared that, after preaching to others, he might become a castaway. In Christ alone is safety; then stay in him—one moment out may be fatal. Noah was safe while he was in the ark, but if he had jumped out he would have been lost. We can get out of Christ and be lost—he will not force us into heaven. Our souls, once so white and pure, by virtue of the cleansing blood of Calvary, can again be polluted with sin—yes, one moment willfully out of Christ will do our work as effectually as the swinging of the censer in the hands of Uzziah did for him. I hope he repented, and was saved. But let *us* quit sin—let us take down the high places from our hearts, and cling to Jesus.

JOSIAH.

“Be strong and of a good courage, for the Lord thy God is with thee.”

JOSIAH was the son of Amon and Jedidah, of the tribe of Judah. He ascended the throne of his fathers at the early age of eight years. In reading the Bible, we soon find ourselves most interested in those characters who in some way typified our Saviour, or were in the direct line of his ancestry. Of the characters in this book, the following are the ancestors of our Saviour: Isaac, Jacob, David, Joash, Uzziah, and Josiah. Like the jewel in the swine's snout, Josiah stands the one bright star in a long night of moral darkness.

David, “the man after God's own heart,” had lived, suffered, and died, leaving the kingdom to Solomon, his son, the wisest man who ever lived. Solomon, like our first father, was led into sin by his wife—wives rather, for their name was legion. His son Rehoboam, more wicked than himself, next ascended the throne. In his reign, ten of the twelve tribes revolted, and went off into idolatry, and were lost forever, leaving the tribe of Benjamin and Ju-

dah. King after king succeeded, each one an improvement in wickedness on the other. Some of them made faint efforts to restore the religion of their fathers to its primitive purity, but had not the moral courage to complete the good work.

Why Josiah was so much better than his predecessors is unknown, as immorality and vice seemed to be hereditary, and he had bad blood, as well as bad example, to contend against. Possibly he inherited good from Jedidah. At the age of sixteen he began to seek after the God of David with his whole heart. In the twelfth year of his reign, he began to purge Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. On ascending the throne, the child's first act was to begin purifying and ridding the country of its corruptions. Perhaps some will say, "O yes; but his officers, counselors, or high-priests, acted for him." To be sure they did; but had he been a bad boy, his advisers would have been bad men. Manasseh, at twelve years of age, on his accession to the throne, did nothing good. Josiah tore down the altars of Baal, leveled his mountains, filled up his valleys, killed his horses and priests, burnt them, and sprinkled the ashes over the country. While carrying on this destructive work, he went to the sepulchers, and, probably with his own boyish hands, assisted in tearing them

up, and, while thus engaged, he saw a small, unpretending monument, and asked who was buried there. He was informed that it was the grave of the prophet from Samaria, who had foretold the things he was then doing; therefore he ordered it to be left untouched.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, while still quite young, he determined to restore the temple. Accordingly, he sent for carpenters, builders, and masons, ordered Hilkiah, the high-priest, to calculate the cost of rebuilding, then appointed men to control the buying of timber and stone. What a young man he was! what an honor to his nation! Money was so plentiful in those days that they seldom counted it. While the work of tearing down, preparatory to rebuilding, was going on, Hilkiah found an old book of the law among the rubbish. It was all yellow with age, crumpled, and defaced, but he gave it to Shaphan, the scribe, who carried it to the young king. Josiah commanded him to read it. He did so; and, while the scribe is reading, the fair, young face of the king becomes more and more clouded. Shame, deep grief, finally despair, shakes his soul to its very center. What is the matter? That honest face, so bright usually, now so miserable! Why, he has forsaken the Lord—entirely forgotten his law—and now is groping in moral darkness, and going rapidly down to the

regions of the lost. The whole nation is in the same condition—instead of being a relief, it only serves to make more severe his sufferings. Now, this faint glimmer from the book, like a flash of forked lightning in a dark night, shows only too plainly the terrible pit to which the whole nation is so rapidly hastening.

We have forsaken His law—His wrath is upon us. Who can read this experience of Josiah, and say that ignorance is not a sin? Josiah could not have been lost, because his *will* to do right was so strong—he would have been saved, but the people, who were not anxious on the subject, would all have been lost. God always rewards an earnest, ignorant seeker after truth. That pure, holy boy, so intensely anxious to do right, is dashing headlong down to eternal ruin, and did not know it, until a seeming accident (Christians call it providence) revealed to him the precipice on which he stood, and the boiling, black waters of perdition below. Boys, beware of ignorance. It is criminal, in this enlightened age, under the full blaze of gospel-light, not to know your duty. I know of only one sin that is worse, and that is, to know it, and fail to do it.

The priest, endeavoring to comfort the distressed young king, informed him that there was a prophetess in Jerusalem, Huldah by name. He there-

fore sent to her for advice. She sent word by the messenger that because the people had forsaken God's law, thrown down his altars, and bowed the knee to Baal, his wrath was kindled against them, and they should be punished. A national calamity! A whole people—innocent children, good and holy women, a few sincere, honest men—suffering because they have forsaken their God! Ah! we know how to sympathize with them; we know what national punishment means, for, like the Israelites of old, we have forsaken the God of our fathers—instead of worshiping him, we kneel to a god whose name is Mammon. Nationally we worship, not a golden calf—better for us, perhaps, if we could, as a nation, unite on one—but, literally, we worship intellect, fashion, appearances, money. We deify all sorts of things, and our children bow down to their own sweet wills.

Josiah's sin being ignorance, not willful disobedience, he shall not suffer with the people; but God, in mercy, promised to take him to himself, and not allow him to see the evil that shall befall the nation, because he humbled himself, and turned to righteousness. Brave boy! Holy Writ says there never was a king who so entirely obeyed God; and his life, coming between a long line of evil kings, on each side casts a radiance that is really dazzling.

Having commenced the work of destruction, it goes bravely on: the people, having entered into a solemn covenant with Josiah, worked with an energy rarely equaled. He broke down the houses of the Sodomites, where the women wove hangings for the groves. He brought the priests of Baal to the city, killed them, defiled the high places where they burnt incense. He broke down the gates of Joshua, defiled Topheth, so that no man might make his son or daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. He then took away the horses and chariots of the sun, broke down the altars and temples made by Ahaz and Manasseh, and cast the dust into the brook Kidron.* Well may he be called iconoclast—image-breaker. In those things Josiah's moral courage stands unparalleled in the history of the nation, reminding me of the Saviour, gentle Lamb of God, as he entered the temple hundreds of years afterward, and with a soul almost bursting with anger (righteous indignation), and eyes flashing fire, he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, rolling money, tables, and men too, for aught I know, on the floor together; then, picking up some small cords, he made a scourge, and whipped them out of the temple, saying, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." How like an enraged earthquake the Lamb was

that day! O Sunday-school teachers, your Lamb is a lion when his house is desecrated, innocence abused, justice driven out! Don't let your little ones think of Jesus as a milk-and-water sort of man—one of those kind for whom you have no respect. Teach them that he was a real man, possessing, with all his gentleness, more courage than all the Lees and Jacksons in the world. He was infinite courage incarnate.

But Jesus is not Josiah. The latter, a boy of sixteen, setting his face like a flint against a whole nation, because God commanded, is one of the grandest examples of moral courage to be found on record in any nation. Having finished the destructive part of the work, and the work of restoration completed, he ordered a grand passover—and what a grand affair it was! No one since the days of Samuel had ever witnessed such imposing ceremonies; and love, joy, and gratitude to God commingled, were the soul of the feast. *How sweet the little herbs* were that day! How they must have enjoyed telling the story of Israel's escape from Egyptian bondage, and now rejoicing over their present and still more glorious deliverance!

Josiah's life was one of continued activity. He seemed to *feel* that he was chosen by God to do a certain great work within a given time, and he bent

every energy of his soul to the accomplishment of this work; and now he enjoys a blessed rest from his labors, while we have his example to stimulate and encourage us in driving out all idolatry from our hearts.

12



DANIEL.

“Touch not, taste not, handle not.”

A SKILLFUL chemist, by the careful examination and analysis of one drop of Atlantic water, can tell what the ocean is, but can form no idea of its sublimity and grandeur; so sometimes we can take a single expression falling from the lips of a man accidentally, and find a clew by which we may enter the secret labyrinths of his entire life, but we cannot see that life in all its greatness till we view it in the light of the judgment-day.

Grandly floating down the stream of time came these words from the lips of one of the purest and bravest boys that ever lived—a slender thread by which we may enter his young soul, and see many beauties; but we cannot see that life in all its richness till that day for which all other days were made shall dawn on us—a lad who impressed himself for good, not only on the hearts of kings and princes, but on us who live so many centuries after him: “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the

king's meat, nor with the wines which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." This single expression, if we had no other, would prove that a great man was the natural result of such glorious promise in so young a boy. These words express a volume of one of the grandest of human poems.

Daniel, a descendant of the tribe of Judah, was born of unknown parentage, in Ephraim, about 532 B.C. He was, perhaps, of the family of Zedekiah, that king of Judah who had his eyes put out by his enemies. Daniel lived in Babylon when Ezekiel did. Jeremiah was then in Jerusalem. Obadiah also lived there. Daniel's mother must have been a woman of great faith, purity, and courage. No fashionable lady ever trained the mind or molded the spirit of a Daniel. He stands by the side of Moses, Joseph, and Josiah, in manhood, and the elements of greatness were in the boy—yea, in the baby—or they never could have developed in the man. He, with other noble youths, was taken captive to Babylon, as hostages, by King Nebuchadnezzar. The king commanded Ashpenaz to select from the captives some to stand before him to minister to his various wants. They were to be healthy and beautiful physically. Beauty of countenance very often typifies beauty of soul, as evil passions and feelings leave their impress upon the

face—deeper and deeper becomes the scowl of impatience every time the feeling is indulged. They were to be quick and bright intellectually, and pure and holy spiritually; so Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were chosen. They were about sixteen or seventeen years of age. Some commentators allow Daniel only twelve years at this most interesting period of his history. These boys had been carefully trained, perhaps, by loving mothers in their homes in Jerusalem. What an excellent training-school is a happy home, surrounded by father, mother, sisters and brothers, old maiden aunt, and grandmother, with her quiet ways! What a holy atmosphere pervades the place!

Daniel was a beautiful boy, modest and intelligent; so God soon brought him into favor and tender love with Ashpenaz. Think of that boy's tender love with Ashpenaz! Did any of you ever ask God to bring you into tender love with a man in power, because he was wise and good? One of the greatest blessings of my life has been that God has often brought me into favor and tender love with those far superior to myself in wisdom and goodness. The very fact that your image is enshrined in the heart of a good man—that your name is wafted on the wings of faith and prayer to the throne of God—is a blessing of no small magnitude.

God raised up Daniel as a witness for himself in wicked Babylon. In this respect he reminds us of Joseph and Moses in Egypt—yea, the gentle Jesus was taken captive from his native skies, and, enchained by love divine, remained in captivity thirty-three years, only he was a willing captive. When we consider how the seen and animal parts of our natures predominate over the unseen and spiritual in childhood and youth—when we remember that our greatest enjoyment consisted in eating, drinking, and sight-seeing—then we shall realize, to some extent, the power of the purpose in the heart of this boy not to defile himself. Again, we must not forget that he was a captive, hungering for his home, and a sight of the temple, in which he had so often worshiped the God of his fathers. Expediency would have shouted, in trumpet-tones, in his ears, “Compromise a little! where is the harm of enjoying the good things of life?” Life is not put here for the sole sake of being enjoyed. This world is a great workshop—toils, groans, blood, sweat, and hardships, are the rule. God made the world as a place of discipline; he made us; he made the tools—faith, hope, charity—and placed them in our hands, then gave the command, Carve out a character fit to associate with the angels. God gives faith, but he does not exercise it. Expediency would have said, “You will lose your influence if

you do not. You are away from your temple; God will not hold you to a strict account. 'Circumstances alter cases.' 'In Rome, do as Rome does.' Follow the fashion—other Jewish boys are doing it." But no; Daniel purposed in his heart—away down in that portion of his being unseen by all but God, where all real boyhood and manhood lies. He did not purpose in his brain, but in his soul, to remain true to his God. His purpose was felt by his three friends, and, stimulated by his example, they too remained so firm that the fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter than ever before, could not even burn their clothing when they walked about amid its curling flames. Live close to Christ, and your very clothes will speak in eloquent strains of the love of God for you. What a glorious boy was this Daniel, who "hung his harp on the willows" of Babylon and wept, and who "sung the songs of Zion in a strange land!" How firmly he resisted appetite, the king's displeasure, and the tender love of his friends! What an all-conquering, self-killing love he must have felt for God!

The Babylonians were very true to their home-made deities, and offered in sacrifice to them a portion of all their meats and drinks; so Daniel knew, if he ate of their royal dainties, that he would be obliged to eat food offered to idols, and this was forbidden by the Jewish law. Daniel did not think

of compromise, but simply requested, after the purposing in his heart that he would not eat of the king's food, that he and his friends might live on pulse and water—a kind of vegetable diet—for ten days, then be examined to see if they were poorer in flesh than the others.

At the end of ten days, Melzar examined them, and found their countenances fairer and fatter than those who were fed from the king's table. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

Daniel's fidelity secured a friend in the king, and he arose to great eminence in the kingdom. His very humility of character was the elevator on which he arose, like Joseph of old, to be the second man in the kingdom. A woman hid a little leaven in three measures of meal, and the leaven gave life and power to the meal, and the whole mass arose; so humility in a boy of character raises the whole being. Jesus stooped to humanity's level, and raised us, with himself, above the angels.

Daniel would not touch the king's wines. O for a race of Daniels to arise, who will purpose in their hearts not to eat or drink from the tables of the kings of this world—who will stand by their purpose, firm as the Rock of Ages! Every boy has his own peculiar temptations spread out before him in this great Babylon of sin; to shut himself up.

or run away from them, is—well, Jesus did not do that. He was in the world, walking about, talking, preaching, praying, suffering; he attended dinner-parties, weddings, visited socially—in fact, was *very man, except the sin*.

Now, boys, the kings—the great, puffed-up Nebuchadnezzars of this world—will offer you a portion of their meats and drinks. You know they are forbidden; you know they are offered to false gods; you know it is wrong to touch the royal dainties. What will you do about it? *Be true to God*, no matter if it does lead to a den of hungry lions—and Daniel's heart-purpose did lead him there. But what was the result? God was with him; angel-wings cooled the air about him—angels' hands were laid over the hungry mouths of the lions. From that den he stepped to the highest position in the kingdom next to the king. His companions, stimulated by his heart-purpose, found themselves rudely thrown into a fiery furnace; and they were burnt up, were they? That would have been bad for a few minutes, but the chariots of fire have landed more than one rejoicing Elijah on the shining shores of the city of God. God had other work for them, however; so they coolly walked about in the furnace, like salamanders incased in asbestos, and talked to another fire-proof man like unto the Son of God. Fire burns only dross—it

purifies true metal. What splendid refined gold these young men must have been made of! The lion's mouth has served as a chariot of pearl to land many rejoicing souls on the other side; but it is none of our business *how* we die, *where* or *when*. Our business is to live right, denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, purposing in our hearts, day by day, that we will not defile ourselves with the meats from the king's table, and with the wines which he drinks.

It is a very beautiful custom, in some of our cities, for the gentlemen to call on their lady-friends, and see them, in their nicely-arranged parlors, looking their prettiest, in their new winter-dresses, and faces full of smiles, as they receive the congratulations of the season. Beautiful! and Daniel's angel, and the angel of the fiery furnace, look down from their palace in the skies, and smile brightly in return. No doubt they almost wish they were human beings. Ah! if that were all—if the young man, so bright, fresh, and clear-headed, could only remain so till midnight! But in the brightest pictures there are always the darkest shades. Satan enters the young lady's heart—she does not know it, as she politely and sweetly offers him a glass of wine (fine wine, of course—who ever heard of inferior wine being used on New-year's-day?). He is expected to take simply a sip—so says Babylon,

or our own New Orleans, if you please. Only a little taste of wine from the king's table! But you forgot to purpose in your heart not to defile yourself with the meats and the wines; or, if you purposed, you did not purpose with your whole heart; so, being polite, you have not the moral courage to refuse the lady. You taste. No harm done (?). Of course not. Had it been prussic acid it would not have hurt you. A humming-bird's head would not swim from that little. You were a polite coward—did your duty to the lady, and sinned against the God who made you, and who said, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

You go to see the next young lady, and the same scene is enacted, only the wine is white this time. No scripture against white wines—no harm is done; yet *it may be*. You go on and on, until you have taken only a sip of wine of all the colors of the rainbow.

I saw a little stream of water, a few inches wide, run through a levee. I watched it, day by day, and in two weeks a whole plantation was completely ruined by the tremendous overflow. So, your New-year tippling is very small, perhaps, but it certainly leads to the overflow of soul and body into everlasting fire. Ah! there are Christian women in this age and country who little dream that their sweet smiles and jeweled fingers are making drunk-

ards on New-year's-day. "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink."

The young man goes to see forty or fifty young ladies, takes forty or fifty drinks from forty or fifty tiny cut-glass goblets—at twelve o'clock, where, O where is he? O young man! why did you not purpose in your heart not to touch of the king's wine? At night, while an anxious mother is praying in agony for her boy, you are hugging the lamp-post at the door, wondering how the house got turned around in your absence, or may be worse—rolling in the gutter, drunk as—I was going to say a dog, but I will not scandalize an innocent, soulless brute. This is a polite age of the world, and *drunk* is not a nice word. I should have said "intoxicated," "gentlemanly merry," "half-seas-over," "three sheets in the wind;" but I will make no apology—will not defile myself with the dainty words of the king of Babylon. I will not use polite, pretty expressions, to describe a sin that I abhor above all things—I mean drunk. I would rather see one of the boys I have taught in a fiery furnace, with a living Christ for company, or hear his bones cracking between the jaws of a hungry lion, than to see him drunk, or on the high-road to drunkenness.

Dear girls, make no compromise with the fiery fiend of intemperance. Dare to follow the teachings you receive, Sabbath after Sabbath, from your

teachers, and no drunkard will come howling from perdition, in the day of judgment, to catch your white robes, and hiss through fiery lips, with blazing tongues, blue with alcoholic fumes, "I am lost forever through the little sip of wine I took at your New-year's reception!"

Children, be like Daniel; dare to be true to God in this Babylon of worldliness, then lean hard against the Rock of Ages. In the name of my divine Master, and commissioned by him, on bended knee I entreat you to "taste not, touch not, handle not," those things that will certainly land you in a lake of fire and brimstone, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

THE INFANT JESUS.

ON one occasion, Moses was out in the wilderness, feeding his father-in-law's flocks, and, looking around, he beheld a bush burning brightly, still unconsumed. He started to examine it, when a voice from the flame uttered these words: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." As Moses felt in the presence of that divine Personage, so I feel when writing the name, and attempting to say something, *savingly*, to the little ones, about the Child *for whom* all other babes were created. I would divest myself of all human feelings, forget my identity, and put myself in God's hands, begging that he send his Holy Spirit to take possession of my heart, purify and inspire it, and guide my hand as he would have it go. I am not only touching this sacred ground, but digging into it. I know of but one thing that fills me with greater solemnity and awe, and it is this thought: Day by day, for years, I have worn the name of Christian, and have professed to be guided by Christ's teachings. What reproaches I have brought on the cause!

What sins, both of omission and commission, I have committed! How many times I *have failed to bring others to Christ, eternity alone will tell.* O how I wish I could gather every child into the fold of the gentle Shepherd! God has gone out into every pain we ever felt in our lives—he flashes in every smile, and sparkles in every falling tear—*all nature is instinct with God.*

Four thousand years of misery and anxious waiting passed away; the promise had been repeated, time after time; men, women, and children, lived, loved, suffered, and died; Malachi had run his course, prophesied, and been gathered to his fathers; the first glorious temple had long been in ruins, and a new one occupied its place; a nation must be prepared—a language perfected. Finally, the people, through intense suffering and humiliation, having now reached the proper point—the language perfected—Jesus comes, teaches his doctrines, accomplishes his work; the language dies, the nation is scattered, each carrying his religion with him, and inculcating it. The Greek language is a dead one, but that precious dialect needs no improvement; neither is there any longer a national religion—no longer a God shining in a living flame on an altar—but the glorious prediction of Jesus fulfilled: “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, wor-

ship the Father," but a Shekinah in every heart, and a God manifest in every thing, when seen through the grand old telescope of faith.

At last, in God's good time, while a world was at peace, Mary, the wife of Joseph the carpenter, gave birth to the long-looked-for Messiah—Jesus, because he would save the people from their sins—Immanuel, God with us—Christ, the Anointed. Joseph and Mary both descended from the tribe of Judah, as prophesied—were very poor, but had the blood of royalty in their veins, and, with every one else of their nation, were anxiously expecting a Saviour.

When the set time had come for "the day-spring from on high" to visit the people, an angel from heaven—even Gabriel, God's especial favorite—was sent to bring the glad tidings. Joseph and Mary were then living in Nazareth. The angel appeared to Mary, and informed her that she should be the mother of the promised Saviour. She felt overpowered, and magnified God, for conferring such an honor on her.

Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be taxed, according to a decree of the Roman Emperor, Cæsar Augustus, as the Jews were then a conquered nation, and were compelled to abide by the Roman laws. The various inns and public houses of the city were crowded, owing to this tax-

ation; so Joseph, being a stranger, wandered about from house to house till quite late, then sought refuge, with his lovely wife, in a stable. That night God the Son left the shining courts of the New Jerusalem, "wrapped our humanity around his divinity," and became a tiny, wailing infant. His mother, having no friend or servant near, "wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger," thus fulfilling another prophecy. How clearly God had marked out the path for him! how plainly the prophets had foretold it! and with what courage and patience he walked therein! Was ever condescension so great? Was ever mortal woman so honored? Surely the blessed virgin must have been a pure and holy woman, or God would not have chosen her to be the mother of his well-beloved Son—to guide his tottering footsteps through infancy and boyhood—to be his soother and comforter while walking through the slippery paths of life up to manhood. Blessed woman! As Protestants, I fear we are sometimes wanting in respect for her memory. Jesus loved her devotedly, and, with his expiring breath, commended her to the care of his favorite disciple, as they stood, almost heart-broken, by his cross, weeping over a common sorrow. While I am writing these lines, she is, I doubt not, singing the song of redemption through the blood of her own dear Son.

Right here the infidel throws down his Bible in disgust. In the pomp and pride of his intellectual powers, *given* him by his despised God, he exclaims, "Impossible! There is no reason, no common sense, in the Christian religion. *I* do not understand how the omnipresent God could roll himself up in an infant form, and be born, live, suffer, and die, as a man, sin excepted. *I* will not believe what *I* do not understand fully." Very well, friend infidel; we will discard Jesus—deny the incarnation—and, in order to be reasonable and sensible, will not believe a thing unless we can understand it. Do you understand how it is that you were once a little boy, in short dresses? You ate, drank, slept, and grew, but how? How is blood made? Why is it not blue? Why should it be red? Probably physiologists can explain these things—ask them, and they pile up long, hard words, till your breath is taken away, the substance of which is: Things are so, *because they are so*. We see a small, brown acorn fall from a tree—does the infidel refuse to believe that a mighty forest is inclosed in its little shell? It lies there—leaves and dirt cover it, dew and frost fall, the rains descend—finally, it rots. Surely all is over now. Not so: the little, invisible life, that can be seen by no microscope—the soul, the germ, so like the spiritual body in man—is wide awake—electricity is doing its silent work

God is watching this little seed. Soon we see the acorn force its way through the earth, a root strikes downward, a green leaf appears—by and by another, then another. Days, weeks, and years, pass on; the acorn sinks its root deeper, and still deeper, into the earth—its branches spread out on all sides. It inhales and exhales certain gases through its leaves, as we do with our lungs. Finally, flowers are produced, then hundreds and thousands of acorns fall, spring up, and, in their turn, form trees, until from one little seed there is a vast forest. How was it done? One man may be crushed almost to death, and still live on for years; another may die from a pin-scratch. Why does the great muscle called the heart draw the blood from all parts of the body dark, then send it to the extremities bright crimson? Where is the life within? What part of our bodies contains our souls? How is it that the diamond we value so highly and the common charcoal are composed of the very same elements? These things, belonging to nature, and not to the world of grace, ought to be easily explained—they can be touched, weighed, measured; surely naturalists ought to know all about them. After they are explained *satisfactorily*, then my smallest Sunday-school child can tell all about the incarnation of *God*. My little Jackie, whose blue eyes have seen the orange-blooms five times, will

say that he loves Jesus because Jesus first loved him. But *how* the tendrils of his heart take hold on God—how he exercises his faith, why he believes it—alas! his teacher cannot explain it. A Christian mind, being finite, is not expected to understand infinity. A God comprehended ceases to be God, and every Christian can testify that Jehovah is an ever-present, prayer-answering Father. He lives in our hearts, unless we drive him away.

Yes, children, Jesus was born; therefore, celebrate your Christmas-days; hang up your stockings, in anticipation of a visit from that omnipresent patron saint of the children, Kris Kringle; fire your rockets and Roman candles; be joyful, and have a good time. Remember the poor, and send them some of your Christmas-turkey and plum-pudding. Be happy, and make happy the atmosphere around you, and Jesus, from his throne in heaven, will look down, remember Bethlehem's sacred manger, and rejoice with you. Blessed Babe! As a galvanic battery sends an electric shock through millions of nerves at once, even so the name of Jesus thrills with joy a world of Christian hearts.

At the time of this miraculously natural birth, there were shepherds on the plain, watching their flocks by night, and "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round

about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." The shepherds then went to the city, and found the Babe, and they rejoiced; and the glad solo commenced by the angel has been sounding on 1879 years, and the day is rapidly approaching when every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall join in the mighty chorus of praise to our God.

While the shepherds were rejoicing, Herod, the wicked king, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; he felt his throne tottering, his crown covered an aching head, his kingly robes hung uneasily upon him. He therefore sent three wise men to investigate this important matter, as he too was expecting a Messiah. Some say they came from three far-distant countries, and accidentally met in Jerusalem, and stopped to make inquiries concerning the new King.

On leaving the city, they beheld a beautiful new

star, that no telescope had ever pointed out, glittering in space. They followed it, and, dancing and glimmering like a thing of life, it led them to a lowly stable, where it stopped. Joyfully the wise men entered the stable, and saw the beautiful Babe lying in a manger, and the happy, mystified mother sitting near.* The stable is not the clean, sentimental-looking place that we may imagine, with the motherly cows and beautiful horses looking on with curious eyes at the strange proceedings, but a dark, filthy, cold, dismal cave. Yes, the infant Jesus, the very essence of neatness and purity embodied, opened his eyes in dirt and uncleanness.

The wise men, when they saw him, presented *him* (not his mother) with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, thus acknowledging him King, as those were things too valuable for any one of inferior birth—gold representing the pure and substantial character of the man, frankincense the rich spirituality of his nature, and myrrh the bitterness of his sorrows. I know not how long they remained worshipping *him*, but before they returned home God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod; so they went home another way.

* On one occasion Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." As Mary lifted him from the manger, the drawing began. The wise men were the first to feel his magnetic influence.

THE CHILD JESUS.

AT the age of eight days, Jesus was circumcised according to the Jewish law. Thus we see, because of sin, the infant Saviour must shed his blood. When he was thirty-three days old, he was taken by his parents to the temple, to be presented to the Lord, according to the Levitical law. Mary was too poor to offer a lamb, so she carried instead two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons. After the ceremonies were over, an old man named Simeon, who had long waited for the consolation of Israel (for the Spirit had told him he should not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ), took him in his arms, and, with joyful tears in his old eyes, he raised them to heaven, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Yes, *thy salvation*—God's own self, the second Person, wrapped in the fair, delicate form of an infant, has come for the salvation of the world. An old woman of eighty-four years also took the great God, manifest in the little form, in her arms, and prophesied. The omnipresent Cre-

ator of the universe in the arms of an old woman! What finite mind can grasp so overwhelming a fact?

About two years passed rapidly away. Herod was all this time planning a way to get rid of this infant King. Things were quiet, as far as we know. Baby Jesus was playing around his mother's knee, in his strange, quiet way; no frown of anger or impatience ever clouded that little brow; no cries ever disturbed that household, save occasionally from a fall or hurt of some kind. Other children came to the home of Joseph and Mary—boys and girls; they acted like other children; they were sick sometimes, had their little quarrels and make-ups; but the gentle Jesus was never sick, never troubled any one—was always peace-maker, was always as an angelic influence in that home, sanctifying unconsciously all things that came within his tiny reach. Mary often sat, at the hour of twilight, and wondered over her strange child—the visit of the angel; and she studied the prophecies, and in silence her pure heart sought communion with God, the Father of her boy. She perhaps compared his birth with Samuel's, Moses's, Samson's, and kept on pondering these things in her heart, and patiently waited the development of circumstances.

When Jesus was about two years of age, Herod's

wickedness reached a climax, and he ordered all male children under two years old to be killed. May be he wished to imitate King Pharaoh in his cruelty, or he may have forgotten that Pharaoh's wickedness was the sword that pierced the heart of his own first-born on that passover-night.

Just before Herod's order was put into execution, the dream-angel whispered to Joseph in the hour of midnight, saying, Take the young child and flee into Egypt, for the king is in search of him, and he will surely be killed. Accordingly, they left their home in Nazareth, in great haste, and went into Egypt.

How nicely every prophecy is fulfilled! "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." Dear old country, once the center of the world's civilization, thou hast sheltered more than one of God's troubled ones!

Joseph remained in Egypt about two years. Jesus was then four years old. At this time he heard that Herod was dead; so he started home, but on the way he heard that Archelaus reigned. He then turned into Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

From every step in the life of Jesus we learn lessons of purity. He was born of a virgin. The first blood shed in his cause was the blood of infancy. A new star lighted the wise men to the

manger. In his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he rode a colt whereon never man sat. He hung on a new cross, and was laid in a new tomb. Ought we not, in view of these facts, to learn a beautiful lesson of consecration? Surely it is our duty, and should be considered our highest privilege, to give our first, purest, and holiest affections to him. Let us give him our hearts in our very infancy, before evil feelings, passions, and habits, are formed. Let us love him all through our lives, and consecrate all we have to him. Let us love him so devotedly that we will *gladly deny ourselves—cheerfully take up every cross for his dear sake.*

As child and man, Jesus hungered for love here. What means his heart-broken wail over Jerusalem? Why did he say, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" and his impassioned "Peter, lovest thou me?" How soothingly fell on his very human *heart* the spikenard from Mary's precious box, for no reason only that "she loved much!" Yes, Jesus hungered for love, and, as the enthroned King of heaven, he still hungers for the love of his children.

Sacred history is as silent on the subject of the Saviour's childhood as it is on the how, when, and where, the disciples were baptized. "Eighteen years of this life, that are all the world to us, are lost in obscurity. We know that they were spent in Naza-

reth, perhaps working at the carpenter's trade, as one said once, in derision, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" The Bible is a strange book. It was written as a guide-book to the eternal city, and in that respect is perfect, and tells all that is necessary to our usefulness here, and our eternal happiness hereafter. It is singular in another respect, which proves its divine character. After reading the four Gospels, we are as ignorant of the color of the hair, eyes, and complexion of Jesus, as if they had never been written. The only description we have are his *words* and *works*. We know nothing of how he was dressed, only that he wore a coat without seam, and woven throughout, and that it was gambled for at the foot of the cross by the soldiers. In Isaiah liii. we have his picture in word-painting, written hundreds of years before his birth, of great beauty and truthfulness. The Bible is the strangest book in existence. It is the word of life to a lost world, and done up in so small a compass that our pastor can easily carry it in his pocket.

Jesus lived several years in Nazareth. He grew strong in spirit, "filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." I suppose, in this instance, grace means the Father's approbation and love, as it cannot mean the grace that fills a Christian's heart, for that is favor unmerited. He was perfect

man and perfect God. Jesus, like other boys, had his hours of glee and frolic. Had he gone from the manger to the cross with a gloomy, unsmiling face, this very fact would have brought him into notice long before his time. He was tempted to commit sin, but not a sinful thought on sullied wing ever flitted across the pure transparency of his mind. I don't know if he inherited sin from his mother, as he did the color of her hair or eyes; *if* he did, then the grandeur of his character rises, if possible, to a still more magnificent height. To struggle against and overcome a tendency to wrong that is born in us is the most sublime victory the world ever witnessed.

Laying aside conjecture, originality, or nonsense, we know that Jesus went with his mother and Joseph to celebrate the feast of the passover. I sometimes try to imagine how this precious boy felt as he ate of the paschal lamb. Did he then know that it typified himself? As he saw the unblemished lamb slain, did he not have a vague, indistinct idea that he was to be offered up for the people? I have often wondered if he knew, when a child, that he was the lamb slain from the foundations of the world; or did he lay aside his infinite attributes? or did they lie quiescent within him until after the baptism? Did the shadow of the cross ever fall across his childish vision? Did the

darkness of Gethsemane ever close around his *youthful* soul? Did the beatific vision of Hermon ever strengthen him in the performance of *childish* duty? I believe he did feel these things to some extent, as we sometimes feel a presentiment of coming evil, or see the morning twilight of a bright hope or joy. One thing I do know—the bravest and brightest angels in heaven were delegated by the Father to attend the footsteps of this holy child. I know he grew from infancy to boyhood and manhood without a shadow of sin on his soul.

Little boys, this is no fancy sketch, wrought out by a vivid imagination, aided by a cup of strong coffee; neither is it a novel-hero, but a real, living, human boy—flesh, blood, and bones—like yourselves, *without the sin*. Study his perfect character, and imitate it as much as lies in your power.

THE BOY JESUS.

“Even a child is known by his doings.” Prov. xx. 11.

WHEN Jesus was about twelve years of age, he went, as usual, with Mary and Joseph, to the passover, for he was a Jew, having descended in an unbroken line from Abraham. Though he was unstained by sin, having been born under the law, it was necessary for him to follow all the ordinances, fulfill all the prophecies, and attend to all the sacrifices and ceremonies of his religion.

After they had finished sacrificing, “as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day’s journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.” At last they discovered that he was nowhere to be found, so they returned, in great distress, to Jerusalem, making inquiries, as they passed along, until they arrived at the temple. Poor Mary! this was *the first trouble he ever caused her*. Going into the temple, they saw the boy, with his handsome, young face all aglow with intelligence, and his fine, dark

eyes glistening with joy, at having an opportunity to acquire knowledge from the learned men of the land. Lawyers and doctors were delighted and astonished at the wonderful questions asked and answered by the little Jew. His education had been neglected, owing to poverty. One said, in surprise, on hearing him read these words in the temple one day, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," etc., "How does he happen to be so wise, never having learned his letters?"

When his distressed mother found him thus engaged, instead of appreciating his feelings, and entering into his youthful joy, she said, in a reproachful tone, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." *The boy Jesus was not understood by his own mother.* Alone, alone, so bitterly alone on earth! Looking her respectfully but sorrowfully in the face, he said, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This is the first sentence from the incarnate Son of God that has come down to us, and no sentence ever uttered by human lips is so richly laden with meaning. Gathering wisdom from the fountain hidden, at twelve years of age, because the Father's business demanded it! He seemed surprised at Mary's question, as if he had talked to her before this of his mission, and had explained

it to her, as far as he understood it. He knew, by a kind of divine instinct, that he was God, and Mary ought to have known it. This being the only recorded utterance of the boy God, we ought to study and value it—search into its hidden depths, turn it over in every direction, and utilize it in our own lives. The amount of food we eat is nothing—it is what we digest. Thus it is with the soul: it matters not how *much* we know, but the *way we use our knowledge*. The absorbing power of the soul is wonderful.

Jesus had studied and thought deeply, or he never could have thrown so much meaning into one little sentence—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He had studied nature, as exhibited to him in the flaming stars, the green fields, and blooming flowers. He had wondered—O how he had wondered! And then too his intercourse with the Father was one unbroken communion—one loving nature animating two forms—God and the child Jesus, the only-begotten of the Father—God acting through two beings. The knowledge of what his work was seems to have grown on him gradually. Even his miracles in manhood seem to have been a charm, the smallest link glittering and blushing in the water-pots at the Cana wedding, and the last astounding the multitude at his own ascension, when a cloud

hid him from their sight. Blessed Jesus! he is there yet, just beyond the cloud.

Boys, when tempted to idle away your time, read trifling books, or engage in questionable amusements, say to the world, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It will take every moment of your time, every atom of your threefold existence—body, mind, and spirit—all the assistance you can get from prayer, good books, the influence of friends, faith, and meditation, and then you will barely accomplish your work—nothing over. Your Father's business is your salvation, and your faith must balance his power. The smallest atom will unsettle the beam—yea, the shadow of an infant's tear would turn the scales. Our faith must be omnipotent, as God alone can make it, if we will let him. Jesus may be spending eternity in incarnating and redeeming other fallen worlds, but to us he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Your souls' salvation is a problem you alone can solve. O my dear boys, you grown ones for whom I have offered up so many prayers, whom I have tried so hard to bring to Jesus, do your life-work well! *Make the world better.* Be faithful unto death, and God will give you a crown of life.

Mary was surprised at this singular reply, and pondered all these things in her heart. How I

wish we had a history of his childish sayings! Even his most commonplace utterances to us would be as the most soothing music. At this time he returned with his mother, and was subject to her, beautifully illustrating the fifth commandment, until his baptism.

All prophecy pointed to Jesus—all types symbolized him. Every glittering scintillation from the polished serpent of brass, as Moses lifted it up in the wilderness for the healing of the people, speaks with an eloquence not to be mistaken—Jesus lifted up for the sin of the world. Every street and alley of the cities of refuge lead to Jesus, the sinner's only safety when the scarlet dye of murder is on the hands, and the avenger is after him. Listen! Moses smites the dead rock, and refreshing streams gush forth. How plainly they say,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!

The scape-goat, with Israel's sins on his head, runs into the wilderness, to return no more; so Jesus takes away our sins forever. Precious sin-extractor! Noah's ark tells of the day when we shall need Jesus, our fire-proof ark, to carry us safely over the fiery billows of a melting world. Abraham's sacrifice, so sad and beautiful, is a perfect picture of the whole scheme of man's redemption—Abraham representing stern, inflexible Justice, as he

stands ready to bury his knife in Isaac's heart. Sinner, look at him, as he lies there, quivering in mortal agony, and behold thy sad fate. The ram, hid in a thicket, reminds us of Jesus, who receives the blow, and man (Isaac) goes free.

"Jesus, the Word in person, is the soul of the written word of God. The name of Jesus burns on every page of the Bible—it burns in every smoking sacrifice. Take calcium out of lime, carbon out of diamond, invention out of fiction, truth out of history, mind out of metaphysics, cause and effect out of philosophy, and what is left? Take Jesus out of the Bible, and we have only a few meaningless fables." Take Jesus out, and the whole thing is a corpse—beautiful, it is true, but still a corpse—that all the resurrection-power in the universe cannot reanimate.* The Old Testament was written to prepare the minds and hearts of the people to receive the Lord of glory—a kind of John the Baptist in the world's wilderness, preparing the way for the King of kings. He came; then history begins where prophecy ends, all forming a perfect chain, every shining link complete, proving, beyond all doubt, *that Jesus, the babe in the manger, the circumcised Jewish baby, the boy of the*

* Since this was written, I have read "Credo," who uses the same ideas—almost the same words—but to express the spirit.

temple, the son of Mary, is God the Son, our Redeemer—that the babe born 1879 years ago is none other than the Messiah.

Infidelity, ignorance, indifference, talent, wealth, vice, “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” have all conspired to stop the progress of this glorious gospel, and it still goes on. It has been read, preached, talked, and lived, and now the musically-inspired Sankey is singing the glad tidings right into the hearts of the people. The Bible, with its three hundred and forty-four contradictions, is in our homes and our hearts, and millions live holy lives, and die triumphant deaths, by its sacred teachings. We, who have tried the promises, and know them to be true, recommend to you a Christian life; for we know that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

“According to your faith be it unto you.”

JESUS had been in the ministry about a year, passing along through the world blessing all by whom he was surrounded, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, stilling the tempest, and casting out devils. The *dumb sung* his praises, the *lame leaped* for joy, the *deaf heard* the glad news. Truly, “the foot-prints of Jesus made the pathway glow.” Health and happiness followed him everywhere. Once, as he was attended by an admiring multitude, a man by the name of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at his feet, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; come and lay thy hands upon her, that she may be healed, and she shall live. Jesus started home with him immediately, followed by the crowd.

Going a short distance, he was met by a woman, who had been diseased many years, and she said, within herself, If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be healed of my plague.

Let us, before going any farther, stop and consider these two *degrees* of faith. Every human

soul has a sufficiency of the article for its salvation, provided the belief be an active, living principle, and takes hold of the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way. In some souls faith is strong enough to remove mountains—in others it is quite weak; but all possess a capacity for increasing it, from small to very great proportions. The woman's faith simply touched the Saviour's garment. A word spoken at a distance, as in the case of the Syrophenician mother, would have had no effect on her—nothing less than a positive touch *of the garment*. However, it was not necessary for her to touch his person. One of the disciples, after the resurrection, demanded a touch from the real human hand of our Saviour.

When the woman came and touched him, in that dense throng of human beings, Jesus, nearly crushed to death, feeling that healing virtue had gone out of him, turned and asked, "Who touched me?" *Confession must be made.* He had healed the woman almost, *but she must confess the cure.* *There are Christians who do not believe in confessing openly what Jesus has done for them.* "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In this case Christ felt only that *one* touch, the touch of faith. He knew he was almost crushed by the multitude, but noticed none but this poor woman. So it is

with a real *heart-prayer*: it will always find its way to the ears of God. The disciples were surprised at the question, but the woman came forward and acknowledged what she had done. Jesus then spoke a few words of tenderness, and sent her away, to bear the glad tidings to other diseased people.

My heart invariably beats with a happier rapidity, and my eyes fill with joyful tears, when I think of Jesus, in his every-day intercourse with women, so tender, so respectful, so kind, to the whole sex—not only to the pure and virtuous Marys, but even the wicked woman of Samaria was respected by him, and treated in the gentlest manner. A woman who does not love Jesus is unworthy of the name. Those men who approach nearest this divine standard in their characters are, and ought to be, most beloved by true women. It is a melancholy fact that the demand for such men far exceeds the supply. But this is a digression.

The miracle of healing the woman, and the subsequent conversation with her, consumed time more valuable than gold to the anxious Jairus. No doubt he asked himself the question, Why does Jesus delay so long? He knows that my child is dying; why keep me in suspense? Healing the woman is all very well, but she might have waited. Hers was not a case of life and death—she might have waited

a day or two longer. My little daughter will surely die if not restored very soon. Patience, Jairus! It is the God who gave your child life for whom you are waiting.

The father's faith was strengthened by seeing the woman healed; but, alas! while they were forcing their way through the crowd, certain came and said to the ruler, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any farther?" Jesus, hearing the remark, turned his compassionate face on the father, and, in tender accents, said, "Be not afraid, only believe." Thus encouraged, Jairus's sinking faith rallied. How quickly a few kind words, even from those we love here, revive and make us happy and strong to do or dare for Jesus! and how very scarce they often are when most needed! How easy to say kind things, and how sweet the memory afterward! When we know that the angels smile when we are good, and weep when we are bad, it does seem that we should always be trying to make more "joy in heaven."

Arriving at the house, they went in, and, sure enough, there lay the little girl, her eyes closed in death, her hands clasped over her breast, never more to suffer here, while the hired women were weeping and wailing greatly. Jesus said to them, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to

scorn." *Silly people always ridicule what they are incapable of comprehending.* Sending those foolish women away, and leaving no one but Peter, James, and John, the legal number of witnesses, he closed the door gently, went to the corpse, and, taking her hand—so cold in death—he said, in the voice of a loving man, but with the power of a God, "Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel (I say unto thee), arise." No looking to God the Father this time—no prayer, no apparent gathering up of his infinite attributes—nothing but his own omnipotence. "And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years." The *unconscious corpse felt* in that man, walking about amidst sin and suffering, the presence of its God. The soul had already crossed the dark river, the pearly gates had already swung back on their emerald hinges, and the disembodied spirit was even then walking the golden streets, amid "the great cloud of witnesses," impelled by an unseen, irresistible power, striving to find its way to the great white throne, to kneel in humble adoration before Him who had sent His beloved Son into the world to die for her. Young as she was, she had looked forward, through the flowing blood of innocent animals, to the true blood that was to flow for her. That gentle spirit, so near the throne, heard and recognized the voice of the Son,

and, quicker than the lightning's flash, again took up its abode in the dust now about to molder in the tomb.

All were astonished. The disciples had seen the other miracles—all manner of diseases healed, the tempest stilled, and devils cast out—but this was something new. Never had they, in their wildest imaginations, dreamed that their Master had so much power.

When Jesus had raised the little girl, he turned quietly to her mother, and commanded her to give her something to eat; then, without waiting to receive the grateful thanks of the household, he told them not to mention it, and left the house.

The most noticeable feature in this miracle is the faith of the father—indeed, this is the diamond pivot around which the whole beautiful transaction revolves. At first, Jesus could not have raised a dead child, as we read that one time he could do no mighty works in Capernaum, because of their unbelief. But his faith grew rapidly, as ours will if we exercise the little we have. The mental and spiritual faculties grow as rapidly and surely as the bodily, if we exercise them properly. Hard and constant manual labor makes the hands hard, rough, and large. Studious habits cause the brain to grow and expand. So with the heart: open it to the kind and genial influences of the Holy Spirit,

and it too will expand. Where we now love one, such is the elasticity of the heart, that by and by we shall be able to take in all the world. We must grow mentally and morally as well as physically. After a certain period in our lives, we are grown in body, but I have never known a finite creature grown mentally or spiritually. The soul is a scintillation of God himself, a sparkle of the divine essence, a ray from the Sun of righteousness—therefore nothing but heaven can satisfy it.

The daughter of Jairus is never heard from again. I often wonder what became of her. Did she grow up to be a good and useful woman, die, and go to live with the dear, unforgotten stranger, who had done so much for her?

We think it a wonderful thing for Jesus to raise the dead, and we call it a miracle—so it is; but is not every conversion from sin and darkness to righteousness and light a miracle? Surely it is beyond the power of nature to accomplish it. All who are out of Christ are as dead in sin as was the daughter of Jairus, and it requires the steadily-increasing faith of the ruler to grasp and apply the blood of Jesus to the heart. The Holy Spirit alone can call back the sin-dead soul to its original purity and holiness.

THE LUNATIC CHILD HEALED.

“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Mark ix. 24.

THREE representative men—Moses symbolizing the Mosaic, Elijah the prophetic, and Jesus the Christian, dispensation—met on the top of Mount Hermon to talk of the decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem. Elijah and Jesus knew nothing of the pangs of death. Peter, James, and John, met this delegation from the spirit-land, recognized them, and understood their conversation. This is the only time in the world’s history that the Church militant and the Church triumphant ever met face to face, to converse familiarly on a subject of momentous interest to both. These two halves of one beautiful whole are close together; only the little line we fear so much lies between—the river of death.

The conversation between them became so absorbing and spiritual that they knew not that little rays of heavenly glory were falling rapidly around them like snow-flakes, making their faces and garments so dazzlingly beautiful that the Church mil

itant, as embodied in the persons of Peter, James, and John, fell to its face in the sublime presence of the Church triumphant. What a solemn, soul-stirring conference was this upon the mountain! It seemed almost an involuntary bursting out of the divine nature through the human body of Christ. This and one more time are the only ones in which our Saviour ever made any display while on earth. The exclamation came from the depths of grateful hearts, "It is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles—one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

When the vision was past, there remained the foundation-stone—the connecting-link between the two—Jesus *only*. Yes, Moses and Elias may forsake us, the glory of the world melt into common air, but with Jesus *only* all will be well. Yes, Jesus *only* is better than a universe without him. Jesus *only*—faint, care-worn, and weary, but the same "man of sorrows."

As they came down from the mountain-top, the heavenly glory still lingering here and there in the soft curls of his hair—perhaps some of the brightness in his dark, love-lit eyes—they saw a vast multitude awaiting them in the valley below. The first who spoke was a sorely-afflicted father, who fell at Jesus's feet, and besought him to heal his little son, his only child. Ah! who knows what

hopes and fears cluster around an only child? Who can sound the depths of tenderness that are concentrated on one little head? Jesus fixed his loving eyes on the suppliant at his feet. Hear the father's mournful story: My boy is possessed of a deaf and dumb devil. Sometimes it throws him into the water, sometimes into the fire. He often falls down in a fit, wallowing, tearing his hair, foaming. Do, Jesus, *if thou canst*, have mercy on us, and help us! Christians sometimes pray precisely as this poor father did—not in words, but in deed—calling loudly on God to forgive sins that were blotted out from the book of his remembrance long ago, showing by this act that they doubt either God's power or his willingness.

Jesus asked the man how long his son had been so afflicted. He replied, Ever since he was a child. I carried him to thy disciples, but they could do nothing for him. Jesus, turning, rebuked them for their want of faith, and commanded the man to bring the child to him. Perhaps the mother, or some faithful friend, had charge of him, as the father went alone to meet Jesus. Now, said he, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Faith and unbelief struggling together in the father's heart, he cried out, "*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*"

Some have faith, but not quite enough. Ah!

we are all like him, to a greater or less extent. With a five-dollar bill in our pocket, we have faith to believe we shall get our dinner to-morrow; but sometimes we are called upon to believe that our "bread and water will be sure" when we see not an inch before us in the misty future. The knowledge of our unbelief increases our faith, and proves it.

As the father led the little boy, so fearfully afflicted, to Jesus, the devil within felt and acknowledged his master—threw the child down, as if *he wished to make a display of his power*. There he lay, rolling in the dirt, tearing his clothes, biting his tongue, foaming at the mouth, every nerve seeming tied in a thousand knots, while his father knelt in agony above him. The spasm spent its force; he was raised up and supported by his father, walked on a few steps more, and was met by Jesus, who commanded the devil to come out, and never enter his soul again. With one fearful convulsion, the enraged spirit threw him down, leaving him perfectly lifeless. O how Satan raged, yet trembled, at the presence of Jesus! The people said, "He is dead." Jesus took the little, emaciated hand, that had never injured a living creature, in his great warm one—so full of life, love, and power—and instantly the congealing blood began to flow through his veins. The cheeks flushed,

he gently opened his great brown eyes, now aglow with intelligence, gazed on Jesus, smiled sweetly, and arose.

At this interesting moment history stops short, leaving the father's and child's joy to our imagination. When the disciples were alone with Jesus, they inquired why they could not cast out this demon. He said, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

This miracle is very minutely described by three of the inspired biographers. Coming immediately after the transfiguration, it is peculiarly striking. Transfiguration glories seen, and demoniac shrieks heard, in the same hour, by the three disciples! What an experience! With such sights and sounds before them, no wonder the disciples built up such grand characters—such stately temples for the decoration of the eternal city. Raphael painted a magnificent picture of his conception of this scene—one on which his fame as an artist chiefly rests. His picture represents the Church triumphant glorified, the Church militant falling in ecstasy before it, while a veil of dazzling light and beauty encircles the whole. Near is the valley in which lights and shadows are playing hide-and-seek, while the multitude is waiting patiently below. The chief characters are the little boy throwing his arms wildly about, while a woman on each side, supposed

to be his aunt and mother, are trying to lead him to Jesus. His father walks on to meet Jesus. He has tried the disciples—they failed; now, as a last resort, he comes to Jesus. When we *feel* our helplessness, we always go to God. If Jesus fails, all is over. The faint, glimmering dawn of hope in the father's face is beautiful.

In the healing of this child, Jesus teaches us this important lesson: This is a working world, a place of discipline, a shop in which we must manufacture a character fit to associate with angels eternally. Sin, suffering, and ignorance, abound at our doors, in our homes. It is our business to check, as far as we can, the tide of sin—to roll back the dark waves of suffering. The tears of orphanage and widowhood are to be dried, poverty fed and clothed, ignorance educated. This wilderness must blossom as the rose, and we children of God are the gardeners. We must be workers in his vineyard. Like Peter, we would stay always with the glorified Lord on the mountain-top of bliss; but while we are there, basking in the transfiguration of our God, his hungry multitude is in the valley below. Jesus says, by his conduct here, Church of my heart, come down from your mountain-top of happiness. Comfort my afflicted. I left my Father's side to bring you salvation. Cheer my weary ones; assist my weak to bear their heavy

burdens. You shall have a glimpse of heaven now and then—enjoy it, inclose it and crystallize it in your hearts forever—but you shall not always be on the mount of joy. Come and send light into the homes of the benighted. Be faithful to me and mine, and my *peace—not joy*—in your hearts shall flow as a river. The sunshine of my presence shall make a constant transfiguration in your souls. Every pulsation of joy you send through a sorrowing soul here shall go back in blessings multiplied on your own lives.



A CO-WORKER WITH JESUS.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."

IT was late in the evening; the sun was setting behind the Judean hills, casting a flood of mellow radiance over the mountains of the Holy Land. Jesus had been preaching the blessed gospel of peace in the wilderness, near Jordan. The loving disciples were, as ever, standing by, to catch every word that fell from his dear lips. A mighty multitude stood listening, wondering, trembling. As the evening passed away, the people became faint and hungry. Jesus too was fatigued, for, as man, he had his hours of suffering and weariness. The disciples asked him to dismiss the multitude, that they might go into the villages and buy bread. There spoke frail human nature. Jesus asked, Philip, how many loaves have ye? "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" This child was perhaps coming from some of the villages, where he had been marketing for his mother, and, boy like, stopped to see the crowd,

and hear what was going on. The disciples, on inquiring among the people, found that there was no more food; so, with the lad's consent, they carried the basket to Jesus. "Now, there was much grass in the place." Make the people sit down, in companies of fifties and hundreds. The obedient disciples, with faith in his power, seat the people on the ground, and return to their Master, helpless themselves, but willing and ready to carry out his orders. *We must be prepared for blessings before they are sent.*

This picture is the most distinct in my mind of all Bible-story. I can shut my eyes, and see the green grass. I can hear the murmuring voices of the people, and can see the faces of the disciples—Judas, so dark and treacherous, as he not very gently assists in seating them; Peter's hasty, nervous way; John's loving smiles and gentle words, as he finds a soft, cool place for the little children and their mothers. Then, all seated, the scene changes. Jesus stands, bread in hand, with his handsome face still unmarred by our sins, and his dark eyes look over the crowd, while the little boy stands by, watching intently every movement. Now, said he, "Give ye them to eat." What a command! Five thousand hungry men, besides women and children, to be fed on "five loaves and two small fishes!" The disciples looked at each other in as-

tonishment at the command. There is a great deal of human instrumentality in this miracle. God honors his children by permitting them to be co-workers with him. "Ye are the salt of the earth," to save the great mass of corrupt humanity. "Ye are the light of the world," that is to illuminate the darkness of heathenism and superstition. True, you are a reflected light. Jesus says, "I will shine through you."

After the people were seated, Jesus took the bread and fishes, the little boy still watching; and now follows one of the most beautiful miracles of the Bible. With the bread in his hands, he looked up to heaven, blessed, and began to break it. Beautiful example! Is there a Christian in all this gospel-land who dares sit down to his well-filled board, and eat his meals sent him from above, without thanking his Father for them? Christian, born in a land of Bibles, how dare you put one morsel of food in your unhallowed mouth without thanking God for it? Know you not that you have bread only for to-day? How do you know that the supply will not be cut off? How do you know that your example will not lock the pearly gates, throughout all eternity, against the sons and daughters God has *lent* you to *train* for him?

Jesus, in this little thing, is still our great Exemplar. Boys, have you ever fed little pigs? Did

you notice, while the corn was rattling over their heads, and falling to the ground, they kept on eating, and never looked up at the hand that sent it? So Christians often receive blessings without a single upward glance of thankfulness. When the corn ceases to come, *then* the little pig looks up, and grunts out, "Give me some more," in his own swinish dialect. They were obeying the laws of their nature, and fulfilling their mission on earth; they had no souls to praise God. When I see people eat without asking a blessing, I always think of the pigs I used sometimes to feed in my childhood.

Then Jesus blessed the bread and fishes, and began to break, gave to his disciples, and they to the hungry multitude. Had an ordinary man been breaking it, the bread would soon have been exhausted. The veiled God of the universe was their provider. The astonished disciples kept handing it around; forward and backward they went, between the Bread of Life, with the bread that perishes, for the hungry multitude. Instead of diminishing in size, at the touch of that creative hand the loaves and fishes increased more and more. But see the little boy, as he stands by Jesus in open-mouthed wonder, gazing at him a little while, then glancing stealthily at the basket. This was a great event in his young life. I would like to

have followed him home, with his basketful of scraps, as he ran in, telling his mother, in a boisterous way, "O mother! I was comin' home from market, and saw a big crowd of people settin' on the grass, by the sea-shore, and a man was preachin' to 'em; and after 'while another man came along, an' asked me if I had any thing to eat in my basket. I said, Yes, and give it to him; only had five loaves and two fishes left. So he took it to the man who was preachin', and I went and stood by him, for fear he would not give it back to me; and, while I stood there, he took the bread and commenced breakin' an' handin' it to the crowd. Upon my word, the loaves and fishes grewed so that there were five thousand men, besides women and children, fed on 'em, and they picked up *twelve basketfuls* of crumbs, fish-heads, and bones. Here is a whole pile that was left. Mother, what do you think of it? Let's go hear him next time he comes near here. I believe he is the Messiah we are all expectin'. I tell you I could see the fishes growin' in his hands; I would n't believe it if my own eyes had n't seen it. He give me three or four great, big pieces of fish, and ever so much bread, already cooked too. I tell you, mother, he is the Messiah we are expectin'. Won't you go and see him, mother? All the boys go, and lots of women—they carry their ba-

bies, and stay all day. He does all kinds of strange things—makes sick people well, and one boy told me he had brought to life a little dead girl. You know Jairus, mother, ruler of the synagogue—his daughter died. Well, she is up, and well now; I think I saw her in the crowd to-day.”

More than likely the boy's enthusiasm infected the mother, and she too heard the wonderful man who raised a dead child. I dare not limit the power of God as manifested in Jesus, the coëqual, coëternal Son. He *could* have performed this beautiful miracle without disciples, loaf, fish, basket, or astonished little boy; *but he did not do it*. The whole beautiful fabric rests on the basket containing five barley loaves and two small fishes; and this basket was carried by a poor little boy. Without this the miracle might have been, but the chief beauty—a *child co-worker* with Jesus—would have been lost. The willingness of all parties is one of the chief beauties. The multitude was hungry, therefore willing to eat; *the disciples were obedient, and the loan of the basket was gladly made*. Jesus is *always* ready to send a blessing, but *we are not always ready to receive it*. Jesus *could* have called manna from heaven; he *could* have spoken the word, and every fish in that little sea would have recognized the voice of God, and have come to the shore. Ah! but they would not have been cooked.

says a little boy. My son, don't try to limit Omnipotence. His simple *will*, without a word, would have set that sea to boiling, and cooked every fish in it. It is as easy for God to take a single loaf, and feed us all our lives on it, as it is to perform the slow, every-day miracle of giving the farmer the health, will, and brains, to plant corn, hoe, plow, then gather it. Yea, Jesus is to-day feeding millions of spiritual bodies on one loaf—the bread of eternal life.

After every hungry child in that vast congregation was fed, Jesus gave the economical command, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." While doing so, to their surprise, the little boy's basket would not hold them; so *they found* eleven more baskets, and filled them. I am sure I have no idea where *they* came from. The women may have brought food in them for their little ones—more likely the creating word of Jesus manufactured them for the occasion.

The evening having passed away, and night coming on, they now returned to their homes, each one full of the wonderful things he had seen, heard, and *tasted*. Jesus returned the basket to the little boy, full of fragments, thanked him, spoke a few words of gentleness, and smiled on him so brightly that the sunlight went down in his heart like a living seed of kindness, that probably sprang up into

a great tree of usefulness in after-life. The touch, a smile, a word, a passing thought, in the mind of Jesus, seems to have sanctified those on whom it rested, when they had the heart to appreciate it. I don't like to hear a preacher say that Jesus never smiled. I believe his laugh in childhood and early manhood rang out as gleefully as a little child's on his return from a picnic. How *can* a baby be a baby without the laugh when "the angels play with him?" It was only when he began his great work as Mediator between God and man that the bright smile left his beautiful countenance. He was a man precisely like others, *except the sin*.

This miracle was performed in the day, before thousands of witnesses. It was addressed to a sense that is seldom deceived. It is hard to fill a hungry man's stomach with poetry, sunbeams, rose-leaves, or music. "And they did eat, and were all filled." They could not have been deceived.

Little boys, God will still take your market-baskets, and fill perishing thousands, if you will let him. This little boy was *willing* for Jesus to have his basket. Bring your little fishes of love, trust, and hope, to him—all your loaves of kindness—and ask him to touch them, and see how fast they will grow; then watch the hungry multitude feed on them. Show a submissive spirit, and you may, by some little kindness, start a train of thought

that will go on widening and deepening until thousands may be fed from your little basket of love.

This story is written for the express purpose of bringing forward the little boy—one of the children of the Bible—that other little boys may gather lessons of usefulness for their own lives, that they too may become willing co-workers with Jesus in accomplishing good. I cannot do justice to this story, because Jesus, with his transfiguration glory, is the most prominent character, and he casts such brightness around every thing that I lose myself and the little boy in the cloud. In another story I almost forget the little dead daughter of Jairus in my love for Jesus.

This little boy passes off the pages of sacred history as quietly and with as little ceremony as he enters it. No one ever gave *him* (*Jesus's little assistant*) a passing thought. John Wesley was once a little boy, and lived and died for God, and to-day he has a living monument to his memory—an immortal one, that will be bright and fair when time has grown gray—yea, till time has died, and been buried in the coffin of eternity. A living, working, happy Church, we are feeding to-day on the same loaf he fed on—Jesus Christ, the bread of eternal life.

This is the only miracle mentioned by all four evangelists.

AN OBJECT-LESSON.

“Feed my lambs.”

JESUS lived several years in Capernaum, therefore it is often called his own city. At one time he could do no mighty works there, *because of their unbelief*. This city has long been in ruins, the very site forgotten, verifying the prophecy, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.”

The day after the transfiguration, Jesus and some of his disciples were in Peter’s house, in Capernaum. He was much fatigued, having spent the previous night on the mountain-top in prayer and fasting, and the day in preaching and performing miracles. There was quite a little company of men, women, and children, in the house. During the afternoon the other disciples came in, and were greeted by Jesus with the question, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?”, “But they held their peace.” A few moments passed in eloquent silence—God was speaking to each soul. Then said one of them, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This ques-

tion had been discussed many times before. James and John went so far as to get their mother, Salome, to ask Jesus to give them the first position—the one on the right, and the other on the left hand—in his kingdom. Jesus had tried to impress on their minds that his was a spiritual kingdom—that purity, humility, and holiness, alone constituted greatness. In order to be close to God, we must be *like* him in character. Judas, at the table of our Lord, dipping with him in the dish, was farther removed from that Fountain of infinite purity than the untaught savage bounding over the wild forests of America, who never heard of Jesus. *The great gulf between Dives and Lazarus is one of character.* Thus far Jesus had failed in his efforts to teach these ambitious fishermen the great lesson of life. Seeing their stupidity, he makes one more attempt. He sat down, and called the twelve, as all needed the lesson—the sweet-spirited John worse, perhaps, than the covetous, unprincipled Judas. With his eyes steadily fixed on them, he said, “If any man *desire* to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.” “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them.” Taking the little one in his arms, he settles forever the question of greatness. Hear, ye ambitious fishermen of Galilee! Hear, ye covetous Judases, doubting Thomases, cowardly Peters! Hear, ye

cardinals, bishops, popes, and presiding elders, and lay aside your questionings forever! "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as *little* children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore humbleth himself as this *little child*, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such *little child* in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these *little* ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

The disciples felt that the important question was settled, and turned to other subjects. What a beautiful object-lesson this is! What a pretty little text! Where could he have found a better one? one more cheerful, suggestive, and altogether charming? See the little one, as he sits on Jesus's knees, his great brown eyes, with the wondering, far-away look of innocence, watching the man who first opened his eyes in a manger. How tenderly the God-man puts his arms around him! See the

little dimpled fingers, as they play, unproved, with the long, silky beard of the Man of Sorrows. No sacrilege in the touch of those baby fingers. Look at the child's eyes, then at those of Jesus. Do you observe the wonderful resemblance? His eyes may have been black, and the child's blue; but the likeness between these two extremes of society is wonderful—the innocence, the sinlessness, constituted the likeness. This idea is plain enough in my own mind, but obscurely brought out here. A child's innocence is negative—the innocence of Jesus is a positive thing. The child knew nothing of sin—Jesus knew all about it. It was around him, beneath, above—everywhere but *in* him. This was an innocence that had conquered sin. A child's mind is a sheet of pure, unwritten paper—it may be common foolscap, note, legal-cap, fine or superfine, but is valuable, or otherwise, according to the history written on it. The mind of Jesus was a ream of the purest character, beautifully illustrated with grand truths—no blots or erasures—a positive, glorious history.

The little child remained in the arms of his friend, the admiration of the congregation, while his mother, proud of the distinction conferred on her little son, stood by, with smiles and tears of joy striving for the mastery on her face. She was afraid baby would cry. Away with your fears.

mother—no child had ever such a nurse. The mission of Jesus is to drive away fears, and to bring out joy from the troubled hearts of earth's weary ones. Jesus sat there, every few minutes looking lovingly into his eyes, as if to gather inspiration, while he preached to the disciples and women standing near. Precious sermon! not long, no firstlies, secondlies, no points and-in-conclusions, no soul-distracting gestures to enforce his meaning. In his own silvery accents he said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Was there ever such a text, such a sermon, or such a preacher? The congregation too was a strange one. Great, rough-bearded men, quietly receiving a rebuke for desiring greatness before it was deserved; ignorant, loving women, with their little ones crowing in their arms; wee toddlers, half-grown, awkward boys, and blushing girls in their teens—all striving to get a place near Jesus. How natural it was for children to love this great Saviour! While learned Pharisees, lawyers, and doctors, scoffed and derided, little children were drawn to him by an irresistible impulse. Stern disciples and order-loving mothers

were alike powerless to keep them away. And Jesus, with his heart open, to take in all the world, had a word of tenderness, a look of love, and a blessed benediction, for them.

I have often thought of this child, and have tried to imagine the scene so dimly portrayed in this simple story. What was the influence of this hour on his heart? Did the virtue from Jesus cling to him in after-life? Yea, it did. Nothing but the living, eternal virtue, springing from the heart of Jesus, enwrapping the soul of this fair infant, could have made him, when infancy and boyhood had passed away, the great Ignatius, one of the fathers of the early Church of Christ, one of its most beautiful and substantial pillars. In the agonies of the most horrible death—torn by wild beasts, for the amusement of the Emperor Trajan and his multitudes of subjects—the virtue still clung to him, and even now sweetens and sanctifies his memory. Blessed child! you comforted for a few brief moments the lonely heart of the Son of God. Your golden curls, nestling against his heart, hid from his omniscient eye the horrors of Gethsemane. Your baby-language and winsome ways drowned the voice of insult on Calvary. One little child *helped* Jesus perform a miracle by lending him a basket of loaves and fishes—you did a nobler work, by *cheering* his sad heart, and affording him

a lively text from which to preach the grandest sermon of his earthly ministry. What a luxury to soothe and comfort Jesus in his lonely pilgrimage!—a missionary from heaven to earth, coming to save sinners, and his life aimed at on all sides!

Dear children, if I possessed the wealth of the world, I could give you nothing more precious than a living trust in this Saviour. I can give you no knowledge so precious as the fact that Jesus is here to-day, with his arms around every one of you. He still says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The grandest work you can ever do is to cheer him by doing good to his little ones here. This child had played around his mother's knees perhaps two years. She knew what greatness meant. Her infant's cry had been a prayer of supplication, calling her to a life of better things. His smile was a thanksgiving. While father was struggling after greatness, it was in his home—his wife's arms—personified in his own lovely boy.

Now, dear children, though Jesus is not on earth, wrapped in humanity, that our coarse, material eyes may behold him, his Spirit is with us still. You can comfort him now. He still lays his unseen hand in felt blessings on your heads. His poor are with us still—his afflicted, his blind, deaf, dumb, lame, ignorant—and he still says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of

these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Whenever we put our arms around his afflicted ones here, we put them around him. The kindly act is recorded in indelible characters on the pages of our life-history, to be unfolded in eternity. The world is a vast lake, with two circles—as we enlarge one, we necessarily contract the other. Let us enlarge the circle for good, and contract the evil. Will you do it?



LITTLE CHILDREN.

“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” Matt. xix. 13-15. “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark x. 13-16. “And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” Luke xviii. 15-17.

JESUS, in his human career of thirty-three years, never said an unnecessary word, or did an unnecessary act. I suppose too that every pain

that racked his human body, or pierced his divine soul, and every drop of blood shed, were necessary for our salvation. This gospel-truth stands like a dark, cold rock, in the midst of a stormy ocean. In view of it, what a stern, forbidding man Jesus must have been! none of those indescribable graces and beauties that go into the make-up of a grand character; no loving smiles, no graceful motions, no caresses—nothing but necessary acts. What an unlovely picture of that Being who was the very crystallized essence of love!

Let us, before judging too hastily, stop and ask ourselves the question, What is necessary to us, as threefold beings, composed of body, mind, and spirit—allied, on the one hand, to the lowest forms of animal life—on the other, passing the angelic hosts, we claim relationship to the God whose breath constitutes our souls? A very little will suffice for the body, but there is the soul-hunger, the mind-thirst, to be satisfied. If the body wants bread, it must have it, or perish. The soul has its great want—love—which is of far more importance than mere physical desires.

Like vines of living green clinging to the desolate rock come these words: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray." "And his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when

Jesus saw it [the disciples rebuking the mothers], he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them," saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Then, turning to the mothers and disciples, he said, "Who-soever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

Jesus had been in Galilee, and was on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified, and, naturally, he felt depressed in spirit. He was a man with soft, tender flesh, red blood flowing through his sinless veins, and a nervous system, as keenly alive to pain as any man. Great multitudes followed him as he went, preaching, healing the sick, performing miracles, and patiently answering the impertinent questions of his enemies. At the time this beautiful little incident occurred, he was in Judea, near the river Jordan, and the mothers came around him—not to ask hard questions, or desire high places for their husbands—not to have diseases healed, but for a noble object—that they might show their love for him, by bringing their little ones to be touched. They felt that there was some great virtue in those hands that had done so much for others—so little for himself. They came, forcing their way through the crowd, with their babies

in their arms, some leading theirs, some handing others over the heads of the people to friends, in order to get near him. What an important ceremony that was to these affectionate women! And to Jesus it was more important still—one of the actual necessities of the divine man, without which his humanity might have given way in Gethsemane, the spot that lay just before him in the near future. In this immense throng there were blue-eyed babies, black-eyed babies, babies with brown eyes, golden-haired, red-haired, and some with no hair at all—indeed, there never was such a baby-show: one single man for an audience; a committee of *one*, to bestow rewards; and every child received a premium—not a medal of silver—ah! no; and not for beauty, but because the women loved this holy man, and brought their jewels to be touched by him. Every mother was perfectly convinced that hers was the sweetest, prettiest, smartest, little dimpled darling that ever put a toe in its mouth, or laughed at the angels. I certainly agree with the mothers—all were the prettiest. O the conceit of mothers! How charmingly silly it is to bring their little ones to a man who was turning the world upside down with his wonders! What vanity to suppose that he will have time for a passing glance at your little ones!

The disciples, feeling a kind of ownership in Je-

sus, were doing what they considered their duty when they tried to send the women away. Jesus is too great to notice such tiny specimens of humanity, say they. Ah! how little they understood the man! How entirely had they failed to appreciate the depth of tenderness underneath that placid exterior! How little they understood the hunger of soul, the heart-weariness, of the Saviour! Now, the little ones—the only beings who were not separated from him by a great gulf of sin, not yet bridged over by the sacrifice of himself—were to be driven away by the disciples, his own dear friends. No wonder Jesus was much displeased, and rebuked them sharply. I imagine, in his rebuke, he did not say, gently, “Peter, you are too harsh with these little ones—let them come.” At one time he said to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” when his displeasure was not so great. So he must, in this instance, have used a few sharp, well-chosen words; then, turning, with a smile, said, Suffer them to come. Yea, these little ones—so pure and fresh from the molding-hand of the Father, with the very finger-prints of creative love in every dimple and every sparkle of the eye—in every motion of their little forms—reminding him of heaven. Had he not left thousands of children standing around the sapphire throne of God, in heaven, in the radiance of the rainbows, singing.

“Glory be to God on high?” Indeed, all the inhabitants of that beautiful land were infants in love, purity, and trustfulness—all had been washed in the cleansing blood. Then they suffered them; and he took the little ones in his arms, and blessed them. Yes; Immanuel, the omnipotent God, could speak into existence a universe, and take an infant in his arms with equal grandeur.

This beautiful little incident was as necessary in his short, successful, earthly career, as the establishing of his Church. It was necessary for a perfect man, in all the weakness of humanity, to *manifest* loving feelings—yea, God, to be perfect God, *must be love manifested*. He must stoop to caress an infant as well as be brave and patient to endure the agonies of a cross. I dare say this short interview with the babies was a source of strength to him in the hour of agony and weakness so soon to come. When the great black tide of human sin was rolling in overwhelming power over his soul in Gethsemane, and he looked forward a few hours, and saw Peter denying, Thomas doubting, Judas betraying, and all twelve forsaking him, he thought, with a thrill of joy, of these little ones—one drop of sweet in the otherwise infinitely bitter cup of the Father’s wrath. Yes, it was necessary for Jesus to have their little arms cling to him, their bright eyes look into his. I see those devoted

mothers, with their little ones leaping with a crowd of delight into the arms of the stranger. Some little mouths are ready for a kiss, fingers catch at his hair and beard; some cling lovingly to his neck, and cry only when taken away. All the enchantments of all the magicians that ever existed—all the wonders of fairy-land combined—cannot equal the enchantments that this holy man exercised over hearts not incrustated in selfishness.

I am not surprised that ancient artists have painted Jesus with a halo of glory around his head. I should have put the halo all around the loved form, and a little on every one who loved and trusted him. That halo is a reality. After all, no man ever yet discovered truth who had no imagination. Call the halo what you will—influence, animal magnetism, or spiritualism, if you please—the power of drawing goodness and purity to himself was there; and to us, who are his children, he has delegated that power in proportion to our love for him. “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, *because* I go unto my Father.”

Then, mothers, bring your little ones to Him now. Never mind the rebukes of the disciples—they have always tried to keep them away, and it may be they always will, though I hope not. Many

a little child would be a Christian, but for the want of encouragement from preachers, the rebuking disciples. Thank God! the day seems to be dawning when they will "suffer them." Jesus still holds out his arms, and says, Let them come; and the little ones will gladly answer the call. Dear mothers, dear disciples, let us not keep them away—that is meaner than the Pharisees were doing; they never forbade their going to Jesus. Dear children, come now; that is the only place of safety for time and eternity. Unless we older ones become as little children, we shall not even see the kingdom of God. Teachers, let us bring the children, that he may put his hands on them. Let us bring them by our prayers, love, and holy example.

R H O D A .

“Constantly affirming.”

THE wicked King Herod imprisoned many of the followers of the Lord Jesus, and among them the brave, impetuous Peter. The infant Church, feeling that “vain is the help of man,” and not knowing how to trust God perfectly, was in despair. Now that their “great battle-ax” was broken, what could they do? They could not realize that this apparent cross was only a crown obscured by human malice and their own blind unbelief. In their sorrow, they met in little companies at private houses to pray for him; and while at their daily employments, though separate in body, their united spirits were constantly sending up a stream of supplication to the mercy-seat. Peter too prayed earnestly; and one night, while lying between two armed soldiers, chained by the wrists and ankles, praying to God, he suddenly saw a bright light flash into his dungeon, filling the room with dazzling brilliancy. Before the astonished Peter had time to collect his scattered thoughts, he felt a touch on his side—a gentle touch, but decided.

full of strength, tenderness, and meaning—a touch that sent every drop of blood tingling and dancing through his veins with a rapture hitherto unknown in his experience. He looked up, and a form of surpassing beauty burst on his astonished vision. A voice like the far-away murmur of the music of the spheres said, “Arise up quickly.” The strong iron chains fell from his swollen limbs to the floor, *noiselessly*. “Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals; cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.” Peter, feeling like one in a dream, did as he was commanded by the angel, and together they walked on in the silence and darkness of the night, until they reached the outer gate of the city. At the presence of the shining one, it fell open of its own accord, and they passed out. Even so do the shackles of sin fall from the bound soul, when touched by the omnipotent blood of Jesus, the Son of God.

Not until the departure of the heavenly messenger, leaving him alone in the darkness, did Peter really know that God had sent his holy angel to deliver him from prison. When left to himself, he began to consider what to do, and concluded to go to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. He wandered on in the darkness, scarcely realizing which way he was going—hungry, fatigued, wrists and ankles bleeding from the rubbing of the chains,

heart aching for the murdered James, in doubt about the safety of the Church, the words of the Lord—"Feed my sheep"—ringing in his ears.

Arriving at the door, almost ready to faint from exhaustion, he tapped gently. No one heard him. Again, a little louder—again and again, each time more eagerly, he rapped. Why are those people so deaf all at once? They are his friends—their whole souls are going up to God in his behalf. He knows that warmth and good cheer are within, behind those closely-barred doors. O if he could only make them hear him! As we read on, the mystery is explained—they were praying for Peter so intently that they failed to watch for the answer. When earnest souls are mounting the golden rounds of the ladder of prayer up to God, they become strangely deaf to earthly sounds. Finally, a damsel named Rhoda came to hearken. She may have been a little servant-girl in the family—she may have been a daughter in the house, or a guest—whatever she was, she knew and loved Peter, and, while others prayed, Rhoda watched and listened. O Christian girls, form a habit of listening to hear God's voice in your soul answering your petitions!

Knowing his voice, she left him knocking, rushed into the room, spoiled the prayer-meeting, and told the glad news—Peter is at the gate! They were

asking God to release him, and, now that he answered their prayers, they were so astonished that they forgot the meeting, and the tired, hungry apostle they let knock, while little Rhoda kept on telling them "that it was even so." They denied, and "she constantly affirmed that it was even so." "Why, Rhoda, you are mad; Peter is in prison, I tell you—how could he get out? These are perilous times. Child, you must not interrupt the meeting in this way." "He is there, I tell you," said the little child. "God has heard our prayers, and released him. The rest of you were so busy that you failed to hear him knocking." "But how could he get out of prison?" "I don't know," said Rhoda, "only he is there." Finally, convinced that God had answered their prayers without faith (if we except little Rhoda's), they went to the door, brought him in, and listened to the story of his mysterious release.

Little girls, take the sermon Rhoda preaches right into your hearts—remember to watch as she did; and when you know a thing is entirely true, keep "constantly affirming that it is even so." Let nothing cause you to waver in proclaiming truth—on the play-ground, in the class-room, wherever you go—for, young as you are, you have in your hearts a clear knowledge of truth that Plato would have died to obtain. Even little Cora knows that

Jesus loved her, and he is God, her Saviour; and that faith, blossoming out into a holy life, is all there is of salvation. Rhoda's example, however, will not all do for you. She left Peter at the gate, knocking away clamorously, while she ran in, upset the prayer-meeting, and listened to the unbelief of the very persons who were praying for him. Blessed Rhoda! your biography was written in a very few words; but you were brave and true, or you never could have appreciated that grand old apostle so much as to cause you to raise such a commotion, and spoil a nice prayer-meeting, with your "constantly affirming."

Who are you, little Rhoda? Who was your father? What a good woman your mother must have been, to train such an energetic, earnest little soul as you! Ah! these are questions that will remain unanswered until we meet you in that world where there will be no need to constantly affirm a happy truth—where no one will say, "Rhoda, you are mad." In the jasper-walled city there will be no tired apostles knocking at the gates of pearl, shivering with fear and cold. There will be no interrupted prayer-meetings, because every heart-beat will be a prayer for more knowledge of God, and a thanksgiving to him who loved us, and gave himself for us.

That every little girl who reads this may be a

little Rhoda, constantly affirming happy truths; that the boys may be, not like Peter, shivering at the gate, waiting for Rhoda to let him in, but, like Peter, in power and earnestness, proclaiming peace, is the prayer of their loving friend.



TIMOTHY.

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures.”

TIMOTHY, or Timotheus, was born in the city of Derbe. His mother, Eunice, was a Jewess—his father a Greek, name unknown. He lived when Nero was Emperor of Rome. His mother and grandmother, Lois, were eminently pious, consequently little Timothy, at a very early age, was instructed in the doctrines of Judaism, and understood all their rites and ceremonies. Almost from his infancy he knew the Holy Scriptures, and was looking in cheerful hope to the coming Christ. He saw him typified in the passover-lamb. He knew that God had flamed in the Shekinah on the altar. Among the first words his infant lips lisped were the names of God.

While still quite young, Timothy heard Paul preach, and, as he listened to the matchless logic, close reasoning, and heart-stirring eloquence, of the great missionary, as he held up the crucified Lord, the boy felt that it was true. The Holy Spirit attended the words, and, before that sermon was

completed, Paul had won a star to sparkle in his eternal crown of rejoicing in heaven. God had taken away the yearning, hungry feeling from his heart, and planted a sweet peace, a deep-seated joy, a positive certainty that the Jesus Paul preached was the Messiah whom he was expecting—that he had come, suffered, died, and rose again, for his justification. How easy it is for a well-instructed mind and heart to receive Jesus as the Son of God! From this time forward Paul, who had made inquiries concerning Timothy's previous life, and found that he was a valuable acquisition to the Church of Derbe, possessed a strong affection for the young man. For fear of being a stumbling-block in the way of the Jewish converts, Paul circumcised him. He may have baptized him afterward, but the Bible does not say so. Surely, if baptism is a saving ordinance, instead of an outward sign of an inward purification, the inspired writers would have given a detailed account of somebody's "burial with Christ in baptism." I teach water-baptism with all my heart, but, if Christian love and principle are to be sacrificed for it, then let the water go. Too many of us are inclined to pay tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, while we neglect the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, love, and truth.

Timothy was a young man of strong faith in

God. This faith was increased by the laying on of Paul's hands. There was no more virtue in the touch of Paul than in that of the humblest child of faith; but have we not all realized, hundreds of times, the power of Christian fellowship, expressing itself in the grasp of the hands, words, love, and faith? It is the *touch* of the *heart* that beats with *love* that thrills. Have we not looked in faces so cold and forbidding that we experienced feelings of aversion in our hearts ere a word had been spoken?

An old lady and her little granddaughter, aged four years, once saw a woman on a car whose appearance was so repulsive that the child said, "O grandma! what was the matter with that lady? She looked just so," screwing her little face into a thousand wrinkles. Her grandma said, "She had a bad temper, and it showed itself in her face. If you frown at everybody, you will look that way too." For months afterward, and even now, although three or four years have elapsed, if the little one is inclined to be cross, grandma says, "Now you look like the woman in the car," and she smiles instantly.

Cultivate love for all *in the heart*. Love is a hardy plant, and will grow rapidly if cared for properly, and the fruits of it are well worth gathering. By and by the face will show that the

plant is in the heart, and even wrinkles and deformity will be illuminated and beautified. We know that there are little particles emanating from the violet that affect us pleasantly. A mocking-bird sings, and it makes us happy. Around a real, spiritually, *live Christian*, there is a halo of glory which we can neither see nor describe. Virtue went out of Jesus and healed a diseased woman. O Christian! live close to Jesus, and virtue from him will pass through you, and fall in soul-saving power on those around you. There are only two influences—the good and the evil. If you are not inhaling from God in your life, and exhaling, in words and deeds, the good, you certainly are inhaling the bad, from the enemy of God. If the pages of your life-history are not beautifully written, elegantly illustrated, sparkling with great principles nobly adhered to, moral battles fought, and victories won, then the pages will certainly be marred, blotted, and unfit to be read before that great congregation, composed of Moses, Elijah, David, Paul, Mary, Eunice, Esther, and Ruth, and your own unforgotten loved ones, for all will be there—all interested in the reading of your life-history.

Timothy, after his conversion, took an active part in every thing that concerned the early Church. He remained with Paul at Athens, Rome, Derbe.

Philippi, and Berea. How beautiful this friendship between the strong, stern, active, educated, old man, and the delicate, gentle boy! Timothy softening and toning down the stern virtue of the fatherly friend, while he, in return, received strength, support, and wisdom. He was with Paul when he shook his garments, declaring he would never again preach to the Jews, but would henceforth give himself to the Gentiles. In several of Paul's letters Timothy sends greeting to the Churches. Timothy's life was a busy one all through; though young, delicate, and suffering much, he has exerted an influence almost equal with Paul's. Had he never been bishop, his life would have been a grand one. Poor, suffering boy! "How do you know he suffered?" says one. Because Paul, the temperance-lecturer of his day, says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities;" and he never would have given such advice to a young man whom he so dearly loved *had it not been necessary*.

Paul wrote two letters to Timothy while he was pastor of the Church at Ephesus, which are in the Bible; and no man ever wrote more beautiful love-letters to his betrothed than did this old, gray-haired, world-weary apostle. I do think Paul was the grandest man of his day. The only thing I ever regretted about him was that he had no wife

and children to tone down the stern rigidity of his many virtues. This boy, Timothy, seems to have absorbed all the love of his heart. The advice he gives Timothy while presiding over the Church, so fresh and warm from his great, honest heart, is advice for every preacher all through the ages, till the end of time. How he enters into all the details—advises faithfulness, watchfulness, reminds him that the eyes of the world were upon him, and to watch over his people! How gently he reminds him of his mother and grandmother! How earnest in his warnings! O Timothy! save the souls of your people! Timothy could not save a soul. Of course not; but the humblest, most ignorant Christian, can live in such a way as “to adorn the doctrines of Christianity,” that others, seeing their good works, may be constrained to glorify his Father in heaven. Any one can throw around another influences that will lead him to Jesus, then pray, and *God will pardon*. Example, advice, kind words, loving smiles, and fervent, continued prayer, are the influences sanctified by God for the salvation of the world. Paul said to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth”—as much as to say, the people, being older than their pastor, would not feel sufficient respect for him. And be careful about your health—it is one of God’s good gifts, for which he will hold you responsible.

How very important for ideas of God and heaven to be the first ones planted in the virgin soil of the soul! Some children can remember very far back in infancy, and then their little minds were so busy wondering! Was ever a child too young to wonder? This disposition, implanted by God himself, is a noble one, and should be cultivated, and directed in the proper channel. Children sometimes ask if the stars are God's eyes, and are laughed at for their folly by a more foolish mother. They ask how trees grow, and are told to hush. By and by, when they learn to read, and catch a glimpse here and there of some great truth, and inquire about it, they are turned carelessly away. Not so did little Timothy's mother. The first tottering steps he made were in the direction of heaven. Into his little heart, at the sacred hour of twilight, as she rocked him to sleep, she told the old, old story of her people, then pointed forward to a great King they were going to have, which would eclipse David and Solomon in the glory and majesty of his reign. He was to descend from Judah's royal line. Hannah's song of rejoicing, and Miriam's perhaps, lulled his childish eyes to slumber many times.

While still quite young, having been faithful in the ministry, and done Paul much good service, he was made bishop of the Church at Ephesus. This

magnificent city, now in ruins, was the seat of one of the first seven Churches of Asia. It was here that the goddess Diana had a temple that was two hundred years in the building. It was here that the uproar was made, when Paul preached Jesus, by Demetrius. He manufactured little silver images of the goddess, and, finding his craft endangered, they made quite an uproar, which would have been serious but for the wisdom of the town-clerk. Here some sorcerers and magicians were converted under Paul's preaching, and brought their books on divination and burnt them in the street. Here too the beloved disciple tarried till "Jesus came." Timothy was with him—perhaps closed his eyes, and folded his hands, and heard the last words of the expiring saint, as he fell asleep.

At the time Timothy took charge of this Church, it was full of strife, envying, and quarreling. Yes, the early Church, one of the first seven, was full of dissensions, almost before the blood of Calvary was dried. It was composed of fallible men and women, like us—had a sinner, saved by grace divine, for a pastor—all sinners, saved by the blood of Jesus, but falling back into sin, because they forgot that the love, faith, and grace, of yesterday will not suffice for to-day. We are progressive creatures, and need constant supplies. The grow-

ing child finds its last year's garments too small. So with a growing Christian: works that required so much patience and strength last year were very well *then*, but will not do now. We cannot slake our spiritual thirst at earthly cisterns—we must drink at perennial fountains, even the river of life. We have in our possession the key that unlocks the store-house of God's rich bounty, if we only use it. Faith in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will bring us every thing. Don't let the key get rusty for want of use.

What a time Timothy had with those people! There was A, who found fault with the people because they were not like him—were not converted right—because they did not speak with other tongues, as on the day of Pentecost. There was B, who was so liberal—gave so much for the support of the gospel, and quarreled because others did not; C, who was rich, and *snubbed* poor people; D, who was poor, and envied C. There were those who talked too much, and those who talked too little. The learned ones were puffed up with their wisdom. The ignorant man was “as good as anybody, if he didn't have no book-larnin'.” Then all found fault with the preacher—he was too young—*they did not want a boy over them*. Why could they not have Paul or Apollos—*any one but Timothy?*

I see, in my imagination (I wish it was only imagination), this infant Church, with its strifes and contentions—the body of Christ, with every member warring against the other—the holy dove of peace pluming her wings for an everlasting flight, while the youthful minister, almost in despair, is exhorting one, reproving another, entreating others, and praying for all. Dear Timothy, you have my sympathy; these trials without, and often infirmities within, need something stronger than wine. But underneath thee are the everlasting arms—around thee an innumerable company of angels. By faith I see the young man, after one of his toilsome days is over, enter his room, feeling *so weary*—longing so earnestly for the rest of heaven. O how he longs for his mother, or dear grandmother!—either of them would be such a comfort. Looking around indifferently, his eye falls on a roll of parchment, compactly written, carefully rolled up. Poor, tired boy! how his pale, sad face glows with pleasure as he recognizes the beloved handwriting! He opens it, and reads, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly-beloved son,” etc. See how his young face brightens as he reads on, feeling the truth in every word. O how he enjoyed the strong affection, good advice, warning, sympathy, and encourage-

ment! How he is buoyed up by the confidence Paul has in his Christian character! What a sanctifying feeling friendship is! especially when we are united in its holy bonds for eternity. We double our interests, confirm our hopes and aspirations, as we gather around us congenial spirits. No doubt Timothy carried Paul's letters with him for weeks, prayed, wept over them, and imbibed their heavenly sentiments in his heart. His sinking faith was stirred up by these letters—golden links between their hearts—his love grew warmer, his patience was increased, his prayers were more earnest. Timothy was anxious about Paul, as he lived in daily expectation of martyrdom. But this little Church prayed, and their prayers, like silver lines from each heart, shimmering in the sunbeams, mingle into one, are caught up by the angel of Gethsemane, sprinkled with blood from the chalice of the Atonement, become rainbow-tinted, and are laid, a solid mass of holy desire, at the foot of the sapphire throne of God, there to be answered according to his own will, and the eternal interests of his ransomed ones.

GLOSSARY.

- Aaron*, mountaineer, enlightened.
Abijah, will of Jehovah.
Abinadab, a father, princely, noble.
Abraham, father of a multitude.
Adam, earth.
Ahaz, possessor.
Ahaziah, whom Jehovah sustains.
Ahijah, friend of Jehovah.
Amon, multitude, or architect.
Amram, people of the exalted.
Ananias, Jehovah is gracious.
Apocalypse, the Revelation of St. John.
Apollos, belonging to Apollo.
Archelaus, ruler of the people.
Athaliah, whom Jehovah afflicts.
Athens, the capital of Greece.
Atonement, agreement.
Baal, the god of the Canaanites.
Bathsheba, daughter of an oath, or daughter of seven.
Benjamin, son of the right-hand (a disputed point among commentators).
Berea, a city of Greece.
Bethlehem, house of bread.
Bilhah, one of Jacob's wives,

- Calvary*, place of a skull.
Canaan, to be low.
Capernaum, valley of consolation.
Cherith, of the cut, or gorge.
Cilicia, a country of Asia Minor.
David, beloved.
Decalogue, the Ten Commandments.
Derbe, a city of Lyconia.
Diana, the name of a Greek goddess.
Dives, a rich man.
Dothan, two wells.
Egypt, a country in Africa.
Eli, ascent, elevation, highest.
Eliab, God is father.
Elijah, God, Jehovah.
Elisha, God is salvation, or he who saves
Elkanah, God creates.
Enoch, initiated, teaching.
Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor.
Esau, hairy, rough.
Esther, the planet Venus.
Exodus, going out, the second book of the Bible
Galatians, people of Galatia.
Galilee, a circle.
Gath, a wine-press, city of the Philistines.
Gehazi, valley of vision.
Genesis, creation, first book in the Bible.
Gentiles, foreigners.
Gethsemane, olive-press.
Gilboa, bubbling fountain.
Goliath, splendor, brilliant.
Hagar, flight.

Hannah, grace, or prayer.

Herod, a wicked king of Judea.

Hilkiah, the Lord is my portion.

Isaac, laughter.

Isaiah, Jehovah's help, or salvation.

Ishmael, whom God hears.

Israel, prevailer.

Jacob, supplanter.

Jairus, a ruler of a synagogue.

James, the name of John's brother.

Jedidah, darling, only one.

Jerusalem, the chief city of the Jews.

Jesse, strong.

Jesus, just, saviour.

Jethro, pre-eminence, superiority.

Joash, to whom Jehovah hastens.

Job, persecuted, afflicted.

Jochebed, whose glory is Jehovah.

John, whom Jehovah has graciously given.

Jonathan, light of Jehovah.

Jordan, a river of Palestine.

Joseph, reproach taken away, hope.

Josiah, Jehovah heals or saves.

Keturah, incense, the name of Abraham's second wife.

Laban, white.

Lazarus, a poor man carried to Abraham's bosom.

Leah, wearied.

Levi, crown, wreath.

Machir, sold, acquired.

Mary, bitter.

Mephibosheth, name of Jonathan's son.

Messiah, anointed.

Midian, strife, contention.

Miriam, rebellion.

Moloch, your king.

Moses, drawn.

Naaman, a leper healed by Elisha.

Nathan, given of God.

Nazareth, the home of our Saviour.

Nebo, mountain on which Moses died.

Nero, emperor of Rome.

Ninevites, people of Nineveh.

Patmos, the isle on which John wrote the book of Revelation.

Paul, little.

Pentecost, feast of weeks.

Peter, rock, stone.

Pharaoh, a name common to the Egyptian kings.

Philip, a lover of horses.

Philippi, a Macedonian city.

Philistines, wanderers, emigrants.

Plato, a Greek philosopher.

Potiphar, belonging to the sun.

Protean, changeable, from the god Proteus.

Psalms, praises.

Pyramids, tombs of the Egyptian kings.

Rachel, a ewe.

Raphael, a celebrated artist.

Rebekah, a cord with a noose, ensnarer.

Rehoboam, enlarger of the people.

Remus, twin-brother of Romulus.

Resurrection, rising from the dead.

Rome, the capital of the ancient world.

Romulus, the first king of Rome.

Reuben, flock of Bel.

Ruth, the grandmother of King David.

Samuel, asked of God.

Sarah, a princess, mother of many nations.

Saul, asked for, besought.

Shaphan, cony.

Shunammite, native of Shunem.

Simeon, hearing, listening.

Sinai, jagged, full of clefts.

Solomon, peaceful, pacific.

Syrophénicia, name of a country.

Tabor, bright.

Tarsus, a city of Cilicia.

Timothy, honoring God.

Tirzah, delight.

Tophet, a place abhorred, abomination.

Uriah, light of Jehovah.

Uzziah, strength of the Lord.

Zarephath, smelting-house.

Zechariah, remembered of Jehovah.

Zibiah, the name of the mother of King Joash.

Zidon, fisheries.

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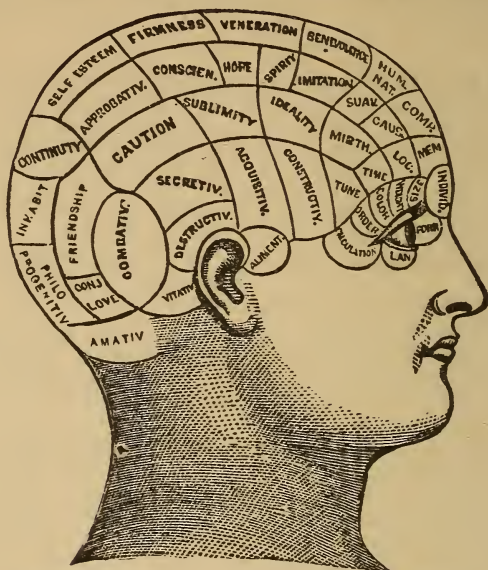
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